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The politics of disaster relief policy (1947--2005)

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The Politics of Disaster Relief Policy (1947-2005)

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ABSTRACT

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Like other studies of agenda setting, this research builds on the work of Baumgartner and Jones (1993), King (1997), Worsham (1997) and Tzoumis (2001), and most recently, Wilkerson, Feeley, Schiereck, and Sue (1999). Specifically, the focus of this study is on disaster relief policy. Two basic objectives guide the study. The first is to examine the origins and evolution of disaster relief policy in order to understand its shifting image. The second is to understand how Congress governs the agenda of disaster relief policy in the post-war period.

The analysis in this dissertation is derived from data collected on disaster relief-related bills and hearings in Congress from 1947-2005. Through the utilization of both bill introductions and congressional hearings, general patterns of issue composition, committee competition and policy monopoly are examined.

This study demonstrates that although congressional committees often serve as the institutional anchor for subsystem arrangement and a policy monopoly, punctuating events can alter the policy equilibrium maintained by such an arrangement.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Natural disasters as focusing events are unpredictable and sudden and their occurrences are known simultaneously by the mass public and policy elites (Birkland, 1998). Given their abrupt occurrence, natural disasters have an immense potential to reshape, change or influence the policy process. From 1947 to 2005, numerous disasters have shaped U.S. disaster relief policy as illustrated through the creation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Following the events of September 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, one can say that disasters affect people and society in numerous ways. Whether man-made or natural, disasters challenge the operation, resilience, competence and responsiveness of the government (Sylves, 2008). In an effort to understand how disaster relief is linked to the actions of government, it is important to examine the agenda in which policies are initiated and created.

This research examines how the emphasis of disaster relief policy shifts between two dominant images-natural disaster and civil defense. A central concern is to explore how Congress has governed the agenda of disaster relief policy since the post-war era. The intent of this question is to analyze institutional factors that influenced the agenda of disaster relief policy. In addition, posing this question is important because it forces one to explore the linkage between civil defense and natural disaster as it relates to aspects of agenda setting. The implementation or effectiveness of disaster relief policy aimed at assessing emergency management is not reviewed, but I will explore congressional agenda setting of disaster relief by measuring bill introductions and assessing

congressional hearing activities. To meet the above objective, the research is structured according to five areas of discussion and analysis. In chapter two, I describe the two types of agenda setting. This discussion serves as a conduit to developing the research theory; which is explicitly presented in the later portion of the chapter. Chapter three presents the historical development of disaster relief policy and FEMA. The discussion highlights when and how disaster relief emerges on the agenda as well as the interaction between the President and Congress. This chapter is significant because it seeks to accentuate the research question and its overall contribution. Chapters four and five illustrate how agenda dynamics in disaster relief are influenced by the institutional actions of congressional committees/subsystems as well as endogenous and exogenous punctuating events.

Particularly, chapter four tracks the agenda status of civil defense and natural disaster by focusing on legislative bill introductions. Serving as a transition into chapter five, this discussion examines and compares the level of attention that both the House and Senate give to civil defense and natural disaster issues. In addition, this chapter tracks the referral of disaster relief bill introduction. The purpose of this analysis is to explore policy jurisdiction. Chapter five expands on the importance of committee turf by exploring and assessing the agenda of disaster relief policy through the examination of legislative hearings. A committee may serve as the institutional anchor for subsystem arrangement and policy monopoly, but punctuating events may alter the equilibrium established by such arrangement. Moreover, not only can the equilibrium be disrupted, but such events can alter policy outputs as well. Finally, chapter six highlights how my

research contributes to the understanding of agenda setting as it relates to disaster relief policy and the steps that can be taken for future research.

Chapter 2

Agenda Setting and Issue Definition

Introduction

The 20th century saw an increase in the occurrence of natural disasters. Local, state, and federal government mobilized in response to disasters such as the flood of 1927, the Long Beach Earthquake of 1933, Hurricane Hazel of 1954, Hurricane Camille in 1965, the 1971 San Fernando Earthquake, Hurricane Hugo in 1989, the 1993 Midwestern flood, and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, among others. At the same time, the 20th century saw increased attention to civil defense matters associated with two world wars, the Red Scare, the Cold War, and terrorism. These events put the discussion of disaster prevention and response on the congressional agenda, resulting in the amending of old policy as well as the creation of new policy. Disasters, as punctuating events, reshape how stakeholders such as politicians, policymakers and agencies, think about and respond to public policy.

This study employs agenda setting theory to determine how and which institutional actors shape disaster relief policy. Agenda-setting may be defined as the process by which new issues get the attention of policy-makers and also refers to the manner in which those issues are defined and the effect of the definition on subsequent policy adoption (Garcia 2007, 1). Agenda-setting is not limited to new issues, but encompasses the movement of existing issues up and down the institutional agenda (Garcia 2007, 1). The agenda, as it applies to public policy, is defined as "the list of subjects or problems to which government officials, and people outside the government

closely associated with those officials, are paying some serious attention at any given point in time" (Kingdon, 1995, 3-4). Cobb and Elder (1972) distinguish two types of agendas: the systemic agenda and the institutional agenda The systemic agenda incorporates, "all issues that are commonly perceived by members of the political community as meriting public attention and as involving matters within the legitimate jurisdiction of existing governmental authority" (Cobb and Elder, 1972, 85). In turn, the institutional agenda is composed of "that set of items explicitly up for the active and serious consideration of authoritative decision makers" (Cobb and Elder, 1972, 85). Given that claims of policy failure are often made by pro-change groups with the intention of expanding an issue, their efforts to move ideas from the systemic to the institutional agenda is the key to understanding the changing course of disaster relief policy.

The Systemic Agenda

The systemic agenda according to Cobb and Elder (1972, 85) involves, "all issues that are commonly perceived by members of a political community as meriting public attention and as involving matters within the legitimate jurisdiction of existing governmental authority." Within the systemic agenda, the general public has the opportunity to discuss policy issues such as health care, drug abuse, environmental protection, and disasters, among others. Most of the items that appear on the systemic agenda are often general with no specific defined solution.

Baumgartner and Jones build on Schattschneider's work by describing how the strategic manipulation of a policy image by policy entrepreneurs often leads to conflict

expansion, the mobilization of new advocates, and the undoing of long-standing institutional structures (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 37). The manipulation of a policy image is exemplified in their study of agricultural policy, where the pesticides subsystem lost control of the agenda, as the issue was redefined to include not only economics but also health and environmental damage stemming from the application of pesticides. Overall, policy images play a critical role in the expansion of issues to the previously apathetic (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 25).

Downs (1972) argues that public attention to political issues typically follow a cyclical pattern. Using environmental policy as a case study, Downs traced public interest in environmental policy through a life cycle of sorts. He opens with a pre-problem stage, where there are low levels of public attention, followed by a "state of alarmed discovery and euphoria generate much attention," and end with a "realization of the costs of solving the problem and a gradual decline in public interest" (Downs, 1972, 10). For Downs, agenda setting was an exercise in futility; if the goal was lasting, public inspired policy change. Baumgartner and Jones employ Downs' theory as support for their analysis of the role of the institutional venue in agenda formation. They refer to the Downsian cycle of interest attention as the "mobilization of enthusiasm" where those concerned with an issue demand governmental action, usually through the allocation of resources (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 890). According to Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 88), a Downsian mobilization may create new policy monopolies or at least set the stage for new institutional arrangement and programs.

Although both Schattschneider and Downs talk about issue expansion, the former's "mobilization of criticism" breaks down rather than builds lasting institutional

arrangements. According to Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 101), both Downs' (1972) and Schattschneider's (1975) varieties of mobilization may occur relative to the same issue over a period of time (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 101). More importantly, these mobilizations may have important policy consequences, even though they may be opposite in terms of substance (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 84).

Like Downs (1972) and Schattschneider (1975), Cobb and Elder (1972, 12) stress the power of the "pre-political" phase, stating that "pre-decisional processes often play the most critical role in determining what issues and alternatives are to be considered by the polity and the probable choices that will be made[…] the critical question becomes, how does an issue or demand become or fail to become the focus of concern and interest within a polity?" According to Cobb and Elder (1972), the answer is that a problem often gains standing on the systemic agenda only after its proponents engage additional advocates by redefining the issue; usually by substituting one policy image for another (Cobb and Elder, 1983, 47). The process of issue redefinition enables policy entrepreneurs to attract the attention of new groups by expanding the conflict associated with a particular policy issue or question. They suggest that issues on the systemic agenda are specific, relatively simple to understand or execute, have a large potential impact or long-term consequences, and involve a principle or precedent already set (Cobb and Elder 1972, 96-102).

For Cobb and Ross (1997), not all issues make the agenda, because some individuals and groups work to keep topics from being addressed through the policy process. The authors focused on agenda denial, "the political process by which issues that one would expect to get meaningful consideration from the political institution in a

society fail to get taken seriously" (Cobb and Elder, 1997, xi). Agenda denial concerns tactics used by issue opponents to keep issue initiators from attaining success at any stage of the policy development.

Cobb and Ross (1997) identified four levels of strategic choice of agenda denial along a cost analysis from low to high cost strategies. The first level, the low cost strategy emphasizes the non-recognition of the initiator position. The key element of this strategy is non-confrontation consisting of varying forms of denial. This strategy is characterized by the refusal to recognize that a problem exists, defining the problem as an isolated incident, and then refusing to recognize the existence of groups advocating the issue (Cobb and Ross, 1997, 10). The second strategy is the medium cost strategy where the goal is to attack either the issue or the initiating group. Here the strategy is allocation of blame. This strategy is characterized by the use of deception (lying, spreading false rumors, planting false stories, etc.) or distorting one's position with a scientific façade (Cobb and Ross, 1997, 12). The third strategy is the medium cost strategy that consists of symbolic placation and is mostly used by public officials. It is characterized by the creation of a committee or commission to study the problem, postponement, and superficial actions that make no difference (Cobb and Ross, 1997, 12). The final strategy is the high cost strategy that consists of threats or violence. It includes electoral threats or the withholding of support, economic threats, legal actions, and physical threats (Cobb and Ross, 1997, 13). Cobb and Ross (1997) argue that an opponent seeks the desired result at the lowest cost possible but will gradually turn to higher cost strategies with the lack of success.

Nelson (1984), utilizing the issue of child abuse as a case study, examined, "how public officials learn about new problems, decide to give them their personal attention, and mobilize their organizations to respond to them" (Nelson, 1984, 20). Nelson cites five common catalysts for agenda setting: catastrophes, technological and demographic change, inequitable distribution of resources, organizational growth, and structural readiness for change (Nelson, 1984, 24). She focuses on an organizational approach to agenda setting and affirms "the process of agenda setting can be conceptualized as having four stages: issue recognition, issue adoption, setting priorities among issues, and issue maintenance" (Nelson, 1984, 22-23). In addition, she notes that the agenda setting stages will vary according to the type of issue, as well as what types of people and groups are participating in the process (Nelson, 1984, 25).

Stone (1997), in her study of the political nature of public policy choices, noted that, "problem definition is a matter of representation because the description of a situation is a portrayal from only one many points" (Stone, 1997, 133). Individuals, interest groups, and government agencies choose to portray an issue strategically, from different perspectives, in order to promote the course of action they perceive to be most to their advantage. For Stone (1997) the essence of policy making is "the struggle over ideas, a constant struggle over the criteria for classification, the boundaries of categories, and the definition of ideas that guide the way people behave" (Stone, 1997, 11).

Like Stone (1997), Baumgartner and Jones (1993) place an emphasis on the centrality and effects of issue definition. Issue definition is basic to their analysis of agenda access because it is able to provoke the punctuated equilibrium cycle in politics. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) argue that issue definition can attract interests that were

previously uninvolved with the issue, thereby resulting in a venue shift (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 25). There is a general agreement among scholars of public policy (Schattschneider, 1975; Cobb and Elder, 1983; Nelson, 1984; Carmines and Stimson, 1989; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995; Stone, 1997; Cobb and Ross, 1997) that problem definition and the mobilization of previously uninterested groups are important factors in determining whether or not an issue reaches the systemic agenda.

An important means of securing a place on the systemic agenda involves use of the media. The agenda setting capacity of the news media has been the object of a large amount of research in recent years. Stein (2001) posits that the more controversial the issue, the greater the need to inform the public and to gauge the public reaction to the proposed change. Information disseminated by the media tells us what and how to think about issues; thus setting the terms of any debate over controversial matters. Studies have shown that the media plays a role in shaping public opinion. Cook (1998) develops a model of the media as an influential force in the agenda setting and public policy process. He writes " the American news media can and do directly influence perceptions of public moods, and in other ways shape the context of one legislator asking another for support, whether or not the public was involved, has chosen sides or was even aware of the issues" (Cook, 1998,11).

Cook (1998) views the media as a filter that functions as a conveyer of information to political actors. He also notes that political theorists such as Scattschneider who were working in the 1950s and 1960s witnessed a different political system than that of the mid-1990s. As a result, one no longer finds a stable situation, with a durable group of players negotiating according to agreed-upon rules. The current situation is fluid and

unstable, with political entrepreneurs and interest groups aggressively promoting not only policy issues but also their preferred solutions (Cook, 1998, 121). In Cook's view, there is an ongoing, interactive process between public officials and journalists that has an influence on agenda setting: "Politicians dictate conditions and rules of access and designate certain events and issues as important by providing an arena for them. Journalists, in turn, decide whether something is interesting enough to cover, the context in which to place it, and the prominence the story receives"
(Cook, 1998, 12). He uses the term "negotiation of newsworthiness" to describe the relationship between the media and political processes. Cook (1998) also argues that as a result of the lack of strong, pervasive institutions such as political parties, the news media has taken command of political communication (Cook, 1998, 83).

A variety of studies suggest that the media is the primary source of information on national political matters including defense preparedness, foreign policy, youth crime, health care, and environmental issues (McCombs and Shaw 1972; Iyengar et al,1982; Nelson 1984; Linsky 1986; Page and Shapiro 1992; Trumbo 1995; Bartels 1996; Hacker 1998; Baumgartner, et al 1997; Shepard 1998; Soroka 2002). Baumgartner and Jones, in summing up this literature, as well as their own work, argue that "the media help create situations that make increased government attention almost unavoidable" (Baumgartner et al., 1997, 23). They argue that an issue's policy image is determined largely by the "tone" of the media coverage. When rapid change in media coverage occurs, changes in the patterns of mobilization in the policy area are likely to follow.

If the media is a vehicle for gaining entrance into the public agenda, others have argued that punctuating events work to advance issues on the agenda as well as to trigger

policy change (Cobb and Elder, 1983; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon 1995). Punctuating events may serve as a "window of opportunity" for politically disadvantaged groups, enabling them to forward an item that previously had been ignored by dominant groups and advocacy coalitions.

Punctuating events allow interest groups, government leaders, policy entrepreneurs, the media and the citizenry to identify with a new problem or pay greater attention to existing but dormant problems. This increased awareness can help identify solutions in the wake of apparent policy failure. Even though groups attempt to refocus the public agenda via media attention, major punctuating events may reach the agenda with little if any promotion, when images and symbols of suffering are clearly visible. Media coverage of suffering as caused by natural and other non-natural disasters is not easily overlooked by an attentive public, nor easily constrained by the dominant policy monopolies. Outrage over policy failure, epitomized by media-generated images of devastation, is utilized by pro-change groups as a recruiting tool –thereby expanding the issue and transforming the issues into tangible evidence of the need for policy change (Birkland, 1998).

According to Schattschneider (1975), issue expansion is important because it increases the likelihood that more influential and powerful actors will enter the conflict on the side of policy change. He suggests that an increase in attention can further tilt the balance of debate in favor of pro-change groups. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) echo Schattschneider's argument, finding that policy under constant scrutiny is likely to be assessed negatively, compelling monopoly holders to accommodate dissenting views.

This tenure in the limelight is more likely to result in policy change as dissenters expect that their proposed solutions be implemented to salvage the failed policy.

The Institutional Agenda

The institutional agenda consists of a "set of items explicitly up for the active and serious consideration of authoritative decision makers" (Cobb and Elder, 1972, 85). The institutional or governmental agenda, often described as the action agenda, tends to be more specific and concrete in content than the systemic agenda. The institutional agenda, which refers to action by government to deal with an identified problem, is characterized by conflict and tension. The federal nature of the American government with its checks and balances sets the agenda up for intergovernmental conflicts in the policy process. Similarly, the separation of powers provides a variety of institutional venues at the national level to be targeted by those interested in moving an issue from the systemic to the government agenda. As Tzoumis (2001, 5) argues, a policy often reaches congressional attention because it has been framed or defined in a fashion that warrants governmental action.

Like Tzoumis (2001), Baumgartner and Jones (1993) assert that the way in which a policy is framed is important because it determines the players and interests that will be involved in the issue. Schattschneider (1960) argues that policy losers strive to broaden the scope of the conflict in hopes of persuading nonparticipants into understanding the issue from their perspective. Thus, expanding the scope is significant because it is instrumental in determining how the issue is defined, and consequently which policy is implemented. Tzoumis (2001, 5) asserts that if an issue is defined in a manner in which

the government is willing to address, then it will have a greater propensity of capturing congressional attention. According to Eyestone (1978, 175), agenda status is primarily achieved only with regard to endemic issues-"public problems that extend over a period of years and generate incremental solutions." He also suggests that Congress is consequential to the status of an issue because it is this institution that groups seek to access in order to have their problem addressed by policymakers. Kingdon (1995, 199) indicates groups who are able to gain access are far more likely to bolster their issues on the agenda and block consideration of proposal they do not prefer. Moreover, such groups are more likely to define the image of the issue according to their interests (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993).

A change in policy venue can result in broadening the scope of the debate and often precedes the enactment of new policy (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993. 31). In many instances when the venue of a policy changes, those participants who previously had minimal influence may find themselves with greater power. Oftentimes, participants who form a *subsystem* can mold or define an issue in a manner consistent with their interests. A subsystem is defined as "a political alliance uniting members of an administrative agency, a congressional committee or subcommittee, and an interest group with shared values and preferences in the same substantive area of policy making" (Milakovick and Gordon, 2001, 89). Such an institutional arrangement can prohibit an array of interests from becoming involved in the policy making process, thus allowing the subsystem to define the issue accordingly, an in most cases at the expense of those formerly excluded. " Subsystems then are a means of getting around the seeming inability of groups to effect closure on decisions that affect large number of interests" (Worsham, 2004, 4). Worsham

(1998, 486) argues that a "subsystem's ability to maintain policy making autonomy is not absolute; but rather it varies across time and policy area."

Worsham (1998) illustrates that subsystem politics may assume any of three forms---dominant, transitory, or competitive coalitions. *Dominant coalitions* benefit select interests as opposed to the public interest. Under such an arrangement, a particular committee or subcommittee is able to establish and control a formidable jurisdiction in a particular policy area. *Transitory coalitions* emerge when "latent interests of some members of a dominant coalition supersede the interests they share in common with other members of the dominant coalition" (Worsham, 1998, 488). *Competitive coalitions* surface when a dominant coalition is openly challenged by a new coalition. In some cases, this may occur when transitory coalitions engage in prolonged conflict, in which formerly excluded minority interests are able to effectively compete over the benefits of a particular policy. Competition may also be the result of challenges by members of another committee (and subsystem), who, in response to perceived threats to their autonomy engage in turf wars (Ripley and Franklin 1986; King 1997). Challengers may simply be new arrivals in the policy domain who are in search of a subsystem (committee) niche of their own (Browne 1988).

Other means of altering policy equilibrium involve the concerted efforts of policy entrepreneurs. Policy entrepreneurs are able to reframe issues so that favored solutions are given to problems. Sheingate (2006, 18) defines policy entrepreneurs as individuals whose creative acts have effects on politics, policies, and institutions and are a significant force in explaining subsystem variations. To him, entrepreneurs shape the terms of political debate, frame issues, affect politics, define problems, and influence agenda.

Entrepreneurs are also considered as source of innovations in terms of investing resources in the creation of new policies, agencies or the formation of new collective actions.

According to Baumgartner and Jones (1993), issue definition and institutional change can allow seemingly secure policies to experience unexpected shifts that alter the approach of the government to a topic. Institutional change often means committees/agencies in government responsible for a policy are expanded, or responsibility is shifted to other officials. Since government actors and structure generate or influence items on the institutional agenda, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) argue that understanding the dynamic of policy monopolies is essential.

Baumgartner and Jones (2002,19) assert that positive feedback forces decision makers to shift their attention to previously excluded dimension of a problem, which in turn may alter subsystem arrangements. Positive feedback models are those in which "ideas of momentum, bandwagon effects, thresholds and cascades play critical roles" in the policy process (Baumgartner and Jones, 2002, 7). In short, positive feedback is often associated with punctuating moments that threaten existing subsystem arrangements. Positive feedback is also produced by the actions of policy entrepreneurs. Regardless of their institutional origin, entrepreneurs bring new ideas and new policy proposals that threaten to upset existing policy equilibrium. Positive feedback may also create new institutional arrangements, and thus create a new equilibrium that in turn reinforces new negative feedback processes.

Negative feedback models posit that " shocks to the system are dampened….pressures from one side lead to counterpressures from another side, and in general …self corrective mechanisms keep the system on an even keel" (Baumgartner

and Jones, 2002, 6). In a negative feedback process "the system reacts to counterbalance, rather than reinforce, any changes coming from the environment" thus changes are likely to be incremental (Baumgartner and Jones, 2002, 9). In this process, equilibrium is produced by institutional arrangements that allow groups to achieve their particular interests. Such arrangements favor the status quo. Although Baumgartner and Jones (1993) view positive and negative feedback as representing "patterns of punctuated change," they suggest that positive feedback ought not to count as the only instance of "punctuated equilibrium"(Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 244).

For Baumgartner and Jones, issues that reach the agenda through a wave of popular enthusiasm or "Downsian mobilization," propel political leaders to delegate power to experts who were able to convince them that they can solve the problem. In the instances that issues reach the agenda through criticism or "Schattschneider mobilization," political leaders pay attention to the details of the policymaking process within a specialized policy community (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 84). According to them, these two types of mobilization can lead to opposite institutional responses: the waves of enthusiasm lead to the creation of governmental institutions and subsystems, while the waves of criticism lead to their breakup.

In keeping with Baumgartner and Jones' (1993) approach of punctuated equilibrium and the important role of positive and negative feedback in politics, this study uses bill introductions and congressional hearings to trace attention over time of disaster relief policy in the United Sates. To illustrate how the aforementioned perspectives and insights to agenda setting are conceptualized throughout the remainder

of this research the following section highlights the theoretical framework underlying the analysis.

Design and methods

Like others who have made an effort to track agenda entrance by focusing on congressional activity, in this study I focus on bill introductions and hearings. Like Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 2002), I review Congressional hearing activities and bill introductions, to get a feel for the level of competition in the disaster relief policy domain. Following their lead (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 2002) and employing data assembled in the *Policy Agendas Project*, I employ the annual number of congressional hearings convened on disaster relief issues as an indicator of congressional attention and priority regarding this policy arena. The coverage of congressional hearings on an issue signals the importance of that issue to Congress. It is worth noting that committee hearings are consequential beyond the limited confines of the particular committee in which they are held. These hearings provide information to the entire Congress, both through the intrinsic generation of information and, notably from the very decision to hold a hearing on a particular topic (Diermeier and Feedersen, 2000, 10). Furthermore, hearings provide outlets for interest groups to express policy preferences and allow members of Congress to develop policy proposals. These proposals are then available in the event that conditions become conducive for major policy change.

Dearing and Rogers, (1996, 1) posit that agenda setting is "an ongoing competition among issue proponents to gain the attention of policy elites." Bill introductions are therefore useful in understanding this process because they serve as an

important indicator of the chamber's interest in a particular policy area (Worsham, 2004; Wilkerson et al., 1999). Employing data assembled by the *Congressional Bills Project* and *THOMAS*, I employ the annual number of bill introductions in both chambers as an indicator of congressional attention regarding this policy arena. Besides indicating that an issue has made it on the agenda, bill introduction illustrates committee jurisdiction.

Conclusion

Scholars have argued that problem definition influences agenda setting as well as policy adoption (Schattschneider, 1975; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995). How problems are defined or framed determines what factual evidence is relevant, which solutions or alternatives are considered effective and feasible, who participates in the decision process, and eventually, who wins and loses. It is obvious that problem definitions draw attention to some conditions in society at the expense of others; locate the causes of the problems; direct the public and elite interest, and subsequently shape and mobilize political participation (Haider-Markel et al., 2001). When a new issue definition emerges on the political agenda it is either propelled by a punctuating event or may dismantle an existing "policy monopoly" and thereby lead to policy change (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1995; Haider-Markel, 1999).

Setting the agenda involves not only getting issues onto an agenda, but also being able to determine the way in which those issues are defined (Beder, 2002, 25). In essence, agenda setting is an exercise of power and influence. This study assumes that although congressional disaster relief committees may have direct influence over the policy, events and inputs from the environment can influence their agenda setting

pursuits and activity. Consequently, the thrust of punctuating events and the actions of other institutional actors and or groups can reinforce or counterbalance the political underpinnings involved in the policy equilibrium. With this in mind, the following chapters seek to understand the disaster relief agenda over the post-war era.

Chapter Three

The Historical Development of Disaster Relief Policy

According to the International Federation of the Red Cross, the Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Center for Research on Epidemiology of Disasters, and the Anton Brein Centre for Public Health and Tropical Medicine, the risk of disasters occurring is increasing. With almost two billion people adversely affected by disasters in the past ten years (Campbell, 2005; IFRC, 2001), Leus (2000) argues that "disaster could only become more frequent as population increases." Similarly, Kizer (2000) cautions that because of population growth and urbanization, we should expect an increased mortality rate from both natural and man made disasters simply because of the greater population density. Clearly, interest in disasters and disaster relief have increased in the past decade, making them an object of increasing interest among those concerned with both disaster relief policy and the policy process in general.

Essentially, the politics of disaster relief matter because they are directly or indirectly connected to public policy issues. Once disasters strike, they attain immediate agenda status and provide a window of opportunity for political action. As such, policymakers have used the situation to show their concern for citizens' needs and demands as well as reinvent institutional structures. Although disasters are unique, governmental actions encompass all aspect of the agenda setting process in the United States.

In order to understand the politics of disaster relief, this chapter tracks the entrance and evolution of natural disaster relief as a topic on the public and government agendas. The story involves the transformation of responsibility for natural disaster relief

from a private concern, to a state and local governmental responsibility, and eventually, one in which the federal government must shoulder the load.

I. Gaining Agenda Access: Reinterpreting "Acts of God"

From its earliest days, disaster relief responsibilities were left to individuals and charitable organizations, or volunteers at the community level (Birkland, 1997; Sylves, 2008). In essence, there was no expectation that the federal government would become directly involved in disaster relief. The federal government was asked to step in and help only when events exceeded the capacity of local and states authorities. Following few disasters and the awareness of extensive, long-lasting devastation to victims, and communities, the federal government began to take minimal actions. The first example of federal emergency assistance involved a congressional act to provide financial assistance to a New Hampshire town that had been devastated by fire in 1803 (Sylves, 2008).

Despite several catastrophic incidents in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the 1889 flood in Johnstown, Pennsylvania that involved 2,200 fatalities, the 1900 Galveston Hurricane with 12, 000 fatalities and the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake which incurred 8,000 fatalities, the federal government did not place a significant emphasis on disaster relief. That being said, the federal government did practice a variation of preventive policy that centered on the construction of levees by the Army Corps of Engineers. Still, for the most part, the federal government viewed natural disasters, such as floods, as "Acts of God" and left the bulk of relief efforts in the hands of the local community (Platt, 1999, 2).

If the federal government was reluctant to assume responsibility for the prevention and relief of natural disasters, it proved more willing to assume a proactive stance in civil defense, establishing a civilian defense system in 1916 that provided for a range of actions to protect the general public in the event of an attack. The Council on National Defense was created to coordinate the "resources and industries for national defense" and "stimulate civilian morale" under the aegis of the War Department and its ancillary departments (DHS, 2006, 5). As a presidential advisory board, its works escalated when the United States entered the war in 1917 and was suspended in 1921 once hostilities ended.

The "Acts of God" policy image changed after the 1927 Great Mississippi Flood, when business found flooding to be even more important than taxation (Platt, 1999). Following the flood, various bills were introduced, and the Committee on Flood Control held hearings. In 1928, Congress passed the Flood Control Act, which marked the first permanent federal involvement in managing natural disasters. The bill not only authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to start levee construction along major waterways, but also allocated funds for rebuilding in the areas devastated by the floods. Clearly congressional opinion about the focus of responsibility for natural disaster relief and prevention began to change, culminating in the first ever-permanent fund for flood control activities (Holahan and Steed, 2008, 10).

Arguably, it was the events associated with an economic disaster, the Great Depression that provided the window of opportunity for those interested in making disaster prevention and relief a federal responsibility. The Army Corps of Engineers, the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the Bureau of Public Roads, and the Flood Control

Act of 1934 all came out of that period (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 3). Reactive in nature, these governmental actions authorized the financing, construction, and maintenance of thousands of miles of levees, floods walls, and tunnels throughout the U.S (Schneider, 1995). It is important to note that no attention was given to nonstructural programs that could actually encourage citizens and communities to prepare for disasters before they occurred (Schneider, 1995).

As World War II ignited in Europe, President Roosevelt, in the act of setting an agenda, reestablished the Council of National Defense in 1940 where states were once again asked to establish local counterpart councils. Tensions among federal, state and local governments began to rise about the authority and resources (DHS, 2005, 5). On one hand, the states claimed that they were not given enough power to manage civil defense tasks in their own jurisdictions, while the local governments asserted that state governments did not give urban areas proper consideration and resources. As such, non-attack disaster preparedness remained almost entirely the responsibility of states, while the federal funding was reserved primarily for attack preparedness. Given the extensive civilian bombing going on in Europe, concerns about possible attacks against the U.S. increased. President Roosevelt responded to the increasing concern of the public and local officials by creating the Office of Civilian Defense in 1941 (DHS, 2005, 5). The office was delegated to protect civilians which include morale maintenance, promotion of volunteer involvement, nutrition and physical education. Like the Council of National Defense, the Office of Civilian Defense created corresponding defense councils at the local government level. For example, the Office of Civilian Defense began the development of concrete civil defense plans, which include air raid drills, black outs, and

sand bag stockpiling (DHS, 2005, 6). With the end of World War II, most U.S. officials agreed that the risk of an attack on the U.S. was minimal and as a result once in office President Truman abolished the Office of Civilian Defense.

Even though the war was over, the Soviet Union's pursuit of a nuclear bomb threatened the U.S. From this perspective, President Truman reexamined the national defense structure while Congress passed the National Security Act of 1947. This act created the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), as well as the National Security Resources Board, which was responsible for mobilizing civilian and military support, and maintaining adequate reserves and effective resources in the event of war (DHS, 2005, 7). As U.S. relations with the Soviet Union became increasingly strained, President Truman began to implement civil defense policy reforms, by establishing the Office of Civil Defense Planning, the Office of Defense Mobilization in 1950, with the belief that civil defense responsibilities should fall mostly in the hands of the state and local governments.

Subsequently, Congress responded by enacting the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950. This act placed most of the civil defense burden on the states and created the Federal Civil Defense Administration which was to formulate a national policy to guide the states' efforts. The act also allocated significant funding for shelter initiative. As the Federal Civil Defense Administration led shelter building, coordination between the federal and states, establishment of attack warning system, stockpiled supplies and national civic education campaign, Congress became increasingly concern about federal disaster assistance, especially in the aftermath of major disasters that grabbed the nation's attention, for example, the flooding the Midwest (DHS, 2005, 8).

This concern was followed by the passage of the Federal Disaster Relief Act of 1950. The act was designed to lessen the economic impact of disasters on state and local governments, and was also the first in a series of bills that transitioned the federal government from its negligible pre-1950 disaster commitment to the current structure (DHS, 2007, 7). The act authorized funding for the repair of local public facilities upon presidential approval (Bea, 2005, 80). For the most part, disaster relief policy consisted of disaster specific legislation enacted in the aftermath of catastrophic disasters like the 1964 Alaska earthquake, the 1964-65 winter floods in the Pacific Northwest, and Hurricane Betsy in 1965. The rationale for specific legislation after each disaster was that each presented "an unparalleled disaster [that] requires extraordinary measures" (Bea, 2007, 22).

Despite the magnitude and frequency of disasters, not a single authority had primary responsibility for disaster relief. Rather, control of disaster relief programs shifted from the Federal Civil Defense Administration (1943-1958), to the Housing and Home Finance Agency (1951-52), to the Office of Civil Defense and Mobilization (1958-1962), to the Office of Emergency Planning (1962-1974) and ultimately to the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (1974-1979) (Platt 1999,15). The evolution of disaster relief policy during this time period took the form of two distinct streams of legislation: one that dealt with general disaster relief provisions and another that dealt with loans for business, individuals, and farmers (May, 2005, 11).

Following a series of major disasters that rattled the nation--Hurricane Hilda in New Orleans in 1964, the Alaskan earthquake in 1964, Hurricane Betsy in the southeast

in 1965, and the violent tornado that swept through Indiana on Palm Sunday in 1965, Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana, acting as an entrepreneur, sponsored a legislation in 1965 that granted emergency federal loans assistance to disaster victims. In 1966, the Disaster Relief Act was passed to codify existing law and provide relief assistance for higher education institutions and rural communities. The act formulated a "dual-use approach" policy as a means to link civil defense warning systems with threats from natural disasters. The policy instructed the Defense Department to use civil defense activities to prepare for natural disaster mitigation and preparedness (Sylves, 2008, 50). Once in office, President Gerald Ford repealed the "dual-use approach" policy, returning civil defense to its previous function, primarily a nuclear attack preparedness program. He also eliminated funding for natural disaster mitigation and preparedness (Sylves, 2008, 50). The congressional response was to amend the Civil Defense Act of 1950 authorizing funding on a dual-use basis "to prepare for the threat of enemy attack and for natural disasters" (Sylves, 2008, 50). In addition, the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 empowered the president to provide different levels of federal aid by creating two classes of disasters--major and emergency (May, 2005, 22). The act also increased the level of aid available and made nonprofit entities eligible for federal assistance. In spite of financial resources made available by Congress, disaster preparedness and response programs though various agencies remained fragmented.

II. Civil Defense versus Natural Disasters

While the focus of policy responsibility for natural disaster relief and prevention was increasingly seen as federal, disaster relief policy took another turn with the accident

at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant near Middletown, Pennsylvania, in 1978. The incident brought to attention the lack of adequate off-site preparedness around commercial nuclear power plants, as well as showed the role the federal government played in regulating safety. On June 19, 1978 President Carter submitted Reorganization Plan No. 3 to Congress with the aim of establishing a single entity to serve as the sole federal agency responsible for "anticipating, preparing for, and responding to major civil emergencies" (Sylves, 2008, 56). The act created the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which reports directly to the President, and assumed the functions of the National Fire Prevention Control Administration, the Federal Insurance Administration, the Federal Broadcast System, the Civil Defense Preparedness Agency, the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration, and the Federal Preparedness Agency.

In addition, FEMA also took responsibility of oversight of the Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, coordination of dam safety, and the natural and nuclear disaster warning system. The additional responsibilities include assistance to communities in the development of readiness plans for severe weather-related emergencies, and the coordination of preparedness and planning to reduce the consequences of major terrorist incidents (Bea, 2002, 25).

A second executive order, 12148, mandated the reassignment of agencies, programs, and personnel into this newly established organization and established the Federal Emergency Management Council composed of FEMA, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and others as determined by the President (Bea, 2002, 28). FEMA's primary role was to serve as the single point of contact for all federal emergency preparedness, planning, response and mitigation activities. The varying

functions that FEMA would be required to take charge of made establishing effective leadership one of the focal points of FEMA policy.

One of the main challenges facing FEMA as a new organization was to create an environment conducive to its own organizational culture, bureaucratic processes and identity, irrespective of the various agencies now under its leadership. Perhaps because of this, President Carter appointed John Macy, a member of his cabinet and the former head of the Office of Personnel Management, as the first director of FEMA. Establishing coherence and unity in FEMA was inherently difficult due to the variety of potential political problems posed by the reorganization of preexisting program responsibilities. In consolidating previously separate programs, the new agency entered a jurisdictional minefield that involved 23 congressional committees and subcommittees claiming responsibility over some portion of FEMA's policy jurisdiction (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 6).

In 1982, President Reagan appointed Louis O. Guiffrida as director of FEMA. General Guiffrida, (a friend of Edward Messe, one of Reagan's closest advisers) whose background was in training and terrorism preparedness at the state government level, reorganized FEMA according to administration policies. As a result, emphasis was placed on government preparedness for a nuclear attack (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 10). Haddow and Bullock (2006) argue that resources and budget authority were both realigned to enhance and elevate the national security preparedness of the agency at the expense of natural disasters.

With this new direction, state directors of emergency management who had lobbied for the creation of FEMA witnessed a decline in both their authority and federal

funding (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 11). In addition, the fire service community was in an uproar as General Guiffrida's reorganization measures diminished the authority of the U.S. Fire Administration by making it part of FEMA's Directorate of Training and Education. Guiffrida and top aides eventually resigned in response to charges levied in congressional hearings that included the misuse of government funds (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 8).

President Reagan next selected General Julius W. Becton, Jr. to replace Guiffrida as director of FEMA. Becton, a retired Army Lieutenant General, had been the director of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in the State Department, and thus might be viewed as a compromised candidate of sorts by those pushing for a focus on natural disasters. Still, Becton did not neglect the civil defense dimension, expanding the duties of FEMA to include off-site cleanup of chemical stockpiles on military bases (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 8). Because FEMA had minimal technical expertise to administer the cleanup program, it came to depend on the Army for implementation, greatly limiting its role in science, while also lessening attention to local emergency management operations (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 8).

Much as his predecessor had, Becton ranked earthquake, hurricane, and flood programs near the bottom of FEMA policy priorities. The congressional response was as expected; Senator Albert Gore (D-TN) raised questions regarding FEMA's responsibilities as leading agency for the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP). Gore, as member of the Senate Commerce Committee, urged FEMA to collaborate with its federal, state, and local partners on natural hazards planning (Haddow and Bullocark 2006, 8). In response to Gore's suggestions and to the concerns

regarding non-attack preparedness during the final years of Reagan's administration, the Meese Memorandum (Executive Order 12656) was signed in 1986 delegating the response role to federal agencies depending on the type of disaster.

Congress followed up the following year by passing the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Act (PL 93-288) in 1988, in an effort to redirect FEMA towards prevention and relief of natural disasters. The act provided authority for the federal government to respond to disasters and emergencies in order to provide assistance to save lives and protect public health, safety, and property (Bea, 2002, 6).

Still, at the end of the 1980s, FEMA suffered from severe problems, disparate leadership and conflicts with its partners at the state and local level over agency spending and priorities (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 9). In 1989, two devastating natural disasters served as punctuating events that called the continued existence of FEMA into question. In September, Hurricane Hugo landed in North Carolina and South Carolina, causing more than $15 billion of damages and 85 deaths. Later that year, the Loma Prieta earthquake struck the San Francisco Bay Area of California, killing 63, injuring 3,757, and leaving approximately 8,000 to 12,00 people homeless (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 10). . FEMA's response to these disasters was slow. The agency waited on the bureaucratic process to work and for the governors to decide what to do before acting. For example, Senator Ernest Hollings (D-SC), acting as an entrepreneur personally called FEMA's director, asked for help, but the agency moved slowly (Bullock, et al., 2006, 6). As a result, federal assistance arrived days later than it might have.

Summarizing FEMA's problems, a 1991 GAO study found FEMA was "not prepared to take over the state's role as immediate responder when the state's resources

were overwhelmed and had placed little emphasis on preparing for long-term recovery in the aftermath of a disaster" (GAO Report, 1991,43). The report criticized FEMA's actions during the response to the two 1989 disasters as "inefficient and uncoordinated" (GAO-RCED-91-43, 66). The report largely focused on the administrative problems within the agency, such as the high turnover rate among agency personnel and FEMA's problems of coordination with state and local agencies.

In April of 1992, the Federal Response Plan was developed as an answer to FEMA's problems. The purpose of the Federal Response Plan (known simply as the Plan) was to address the consequences of any disaster or emergency in which there was need for federal response assistance under the authorities of the Stafford Act (Bea, 2002, 18). The Plan used a functional approach to group the types of federal assistance that states are likely to need under Emergency Support Functions (ESF): public works and engineers, transportation, information and planning, communications, health and medical services, fire fighting, urban search and rescue, mass care, resource support, hazardous material, and energy.

Primary governmental agencies charged with implementing function-based responses are selected to head the ESFs based on authority, resources, and capabilities. The primary purpose of the Plan was "to establish fundamental assumptions and policies as well as establish a concept of operations that provided an interagency coordination mechanism to facilitate the immediate delivery of federal response assistance" (PL 93-288).

The Plan applied to all federal government disaster response activities, but did not address recovery assistance. According to Hogue and Bea (2006), Sylves and Cumming

(2004), and Bea (2002), the most important element of the Plan was to supplement state and local government response efforts. ESFs were to be implemented via coordination between the federal officers and state officials, who would work to identify specific response requirements and provide necessary federal response assistance based on state-identified priorities. The plan assigned roles to 27 federal agencies and the American Red Cross in the event of a large-scale disaster. In addition, relief efforts could be activated whether or not a presidential declaration of a major disaster was in effect, essentially bypassing the White House (Sylves and Cumming, 2004, 15).

The Plan was put to the test in 1992, when Hurricane Andrew hit south Florida as a category 4 Hurricane and the central Louisiana coast as a category 3 Hurricane. FEMA's response was harshly criticized with detractors who noted that "thousands of homeless Floridians searched days for food, water, and help while relief efforts lagged" (Davis in Hogue and Bea, 2006, 17). FEMA's inability to respond was due to the fact that nobody at the local, state, or federal level understood the severity of the damage, and failed to rapidly assess the extent of the damage, and to deploy essential relief (Mener, 2007, 28). This suggests in essence, that the Plan was not well developed into an operational strategy. In an attempt to address the anemic response, President George H. W. Bush bypassed FEMA and sent in a task force led by Secretary of Transportation Andrew H. Card, Jr., to coordinate the response (Schneider, 1995, 81).

III. Restructuring FEMA

FEMA's poor performance during the response to Hurricane Andrew led Congress to call for an evaluation and reformation of the agency. As a result, Congress instructed FEMA to contract with the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) for "a comprehensive and objective study of the Federal, state and local government's capabilities to respond promptly and effectively to major natural disasters occurring in the United States" (Cong. Rec., 1992, 63). The congressionally mandated NAPA report was issued in February of 1993. The report addressed the viability of FEMA and stated that "emergency management and FEMA are overseen by too many congressional committees, none of which has either the interest [in] or a comprehensive overview of the topic to assure that coherent federal policy is developed and implemented" (NAPA Report 1993, 2). To be successful, the agency would need a more coherent legislative charter, greater funding flexibility, and sustained support for building an effective agency and a national emergency management system response (NAPA Report, 1993, 2).

After months of testimony, the GAO issued a report in July of 1993 recommending that, "in order to underscore the commitment of the President, responsibility for catastrophic disaster preparedness and response should be placed with a key official in the White House" (GAO Report, 1993, 2). The report noted that:

> a disaster unit is needed to provide the White House and the Director of FEMA with information, analysis, and technical support to improve federal decision-making on helping state and local governments before, during and after catastrophic disasters . . . the FEMA directorates whose resources would form the disaster unit—National Preparedness and State and Local Programs and Support—have historically not worked well together.

The report concluded by suggesting that major reorganization was needed (GAO Report, 1993, 3). These recommendations were considered by President Clinton as well as Congress, but instead of reorganizing the whole disaster response system, they made minor administrative and structural changes (Miskel, 2006, 88). These changes were made because FEMA had high rates of turnover among agency personnel, as well as problems dealing with states and local agencies (Waugh, 2000, 28).

In 1993, President Clinton appointed James L. Witt as the new Director of FEMA. With a strong interest in matters of disaster policy, President Clinton helped improve both the substance and image of FEMA operations. As part of the National Performance Review (NPR) process, in association with the administration's efforts to reinvent government, the NPR recommended

> shifting FEMA's resources and focus from preparedness for nuclear war to preparation for, and response to, all disasters; developing a more anticipatory and customer-driven response to catastrophic disasters; creating results-oriented incentives to reduce the costs of disaster; and developing a skilled management team among political appointees and career staff. (Hogue and Bea, 2006, 17)

As the director, Witt reorganized the agency in accordance with many of the NAPA and GAO recommendations (Hogue and Bea, 2006, 17). For Schneider (2008, 42), Witt's focus on "all hazards" was at the forefront of FEMA's mission and redirected the agency's focus from nuclear attacks to natural disasters. Inside the agency, Witt reached out to all employees and implemented customer service training; he also reorganized and supported the use of new technologies to deliver disaster services and placed an emphasis on mitigation and risk avoidance (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 10). Outside the agency, he strengthened the relationships with state and local emergency managers and built new ones with the House Armed Services, Veteran Affairs, Energy

and Commerce committees, the Clinton administration, and the media (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 10). His relationship with Congress was exemplified in the laws that were passed that focus on preparedness. For example, the disaster relief legislation passed in 1996 and 1998 improved hazards mitigation and relocation assistance as well as established an advisory commission to provide advice and recommendation.

According to Bea (2006), under Witt, FEMA was able to develop its first new mission statement in ten years, which emphasized comprehensive, risk-based, all hazards management program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. In addition, FEMA's future management decisions and programs were based on six goals related to the new mission. The first goal was to create an emergency management partnership with other federal agencies, state and local governments, volunteer organizations, and the private sector. The second goal was to establish, in concert with FEMA's partners, a comprehensive, risk-based, and all-hazards approach. This goal was to be followed by making hazard mitigation the foundation of the national emergency management system. The fourth goal was to provide a rapid and effective response to any disaster. The fifth goal was to strengthen state and local emergency management, as well as revitalize the agency and develop a more effective and involved cadre of FEMA managers, permanent employees, and disaster reservists (Bea, 2006, 2). Overall, FEMA's "dominant philosophy became one of customer service" where the focus was on citizens either preparing for or recovering from disasters (Anderson, 2001, 71).

Witt's reorganization, in accordance with many of the NAPA and GAO recommendations, established three functional directorates to correspond with major phases of emergency management: a Preparedness, Training, and Exercises Directorate, a

Response and Recovery Directorate, and a Mitigation Directorate. The Preparedness Directorate funds state and local disaster planning as well as coordinates federal interagency planning for disaster response and continuity of government in the event of a federal government crisis (CRS, 2004; FEMA 2006, 3). In addition, the Preparedness Directorate relies on a systemic conceptualization of emergency management to identify threats, hazards, and vulnerabilities (Sylves, 2008, 23). For example, the standards used also known as the EMAP standards are based on the National Fire Protection Association 1600 Standards. These standards were developed by state, local and federal emergency management practitioners in order to improve emergency coordination and response (Sylves, 2008, 23).

First, the Response Directorate coordinates federal operational and logistical disaster response capability needed to save and sustain lives, minimize suffering, and protect property in a timely and effective manner in communities that become overwhelmed by natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other emergencies (CRS, 2004, 22; FEMA, 2006). The response segment is often the most dramatic phase of the disaster cycle because it entails applying intelligence to lessen the effects or consequences of an incident (Sylves, 2008).

Second, the Recovery Directorate ensures that individuals and communities affected by disasters of all sizes are able to return to normal function with minimal suffering and disruption of services (FEMA, 2006, 3). This stage of the disaster cycle is the most expensive phase since it involves restoration, rebuilding, and a return to normalcy. At this phase, decisions regarding the recovery process are made at the local level of government (Sylves, 2008).

Finally,the Mitigation Directorate defines hazard mitigation as sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from hazards and their effects (FEMA, 2006, 1). The Mitigation Division is comprised of three branches: the Risk Analysis, the Risk Reduction and the Risk Insurance (CRS, 2004, 22; FEMA, 2006, 3). This state of the disaster cycle requires partners outside the traditional emergency management system. An example is the partnership of land-use planners with construction and building officials as well as with community leaders. The tools of mitigation include hazard identification and mapping and building codes (Purpura, 207, 284).

To facilitate inter-agency cooperation, Congress amended the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Act in 1993 to authorize a program for pre-disaster mitigation and streamline the administration of disaster relief (Anderson, 2001). This shift in prevention was due in part to disasters that transpired during the year (i.e. the Great Midwest Flood and the bombing of the World Trade Center). Congress also included the development of multi-agency Emergency Response Teams, Emergency Support Teams, and Field Assessment Teams with the ability to respond to disasters within four hours of occurrence (Anderson, 2001, 72). By working closely with the interagency Catastrophic Disaster Response Group, which served as the focal point for the Federal Response Plan, Witt promoted a risk-based, all-hazards emergency management system and directed regional offices to work closely with their state and local counterparts on a regular basis (Anderson, 2001, 73; FEMA, 1994).

Despite the fact that the agency made significant improvements, FEMA was not free from challenges. During this time, FEMA was strongly criticized for not addressing

special needs populations during disasters (FEMA, 1994). Studies by Daniels and Clark-Daniels (2000, 35) and Hogue and Bea (2006, 18) found that FEMA still had to improve in two areas: financial management and the disaster declaration process. These two areas of improvement were put to test following the Great Midwest Floods of 1993. The recovery phase of this disaster offered opportunity for mitigation actions. FEMA used this window of opportunity to change the focus of post disaster recovery by initiating the largest voluntary buyout and relocation program to date in an effort to move people out of the floodplain and out of harm's way (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 11). The following year, FEMA faced another challenge: the Northridge, California Earthquake of 1994. This earthquake tested the new streamlined approaches and technological advancements in service delivery (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 12). FEMA's proactive response and coordination with states and local governments was positive as well as highlighted suggestions made by the NPR. The agency's performance in the aftermath of the earthquake demonstrated that it had transformed itself from a passive agency to a hard-driving, problem solving organization with a much deeper commitment to serve its citizens (Johnston, 2000, 136). In the late 1990s, FEMA faced several more natural disasters, including tornadoes, ice storms, hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and drought, but none were actually catastrophic in size or strength (Miskel, 2006, 86) and it responded positively since it was able to develop a national and regional cadre of skilled, dedicated emergency management specialists (Johnston, 2000, 136).

Although the focus on preparedness allowed the agency to center on natural disaster, Congress in 1993 included a joint resolution in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), calling on FEMA to develop an early detection and warning

system in response to potential terrorist use of chemical or biological agents or weapons (Cong. Rec., 1993, 22). Congressional concern was due in part to the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center. In 1994, Congress repealed the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950 and all remnants of civil defense authority were transferred to Title VI of the Stafford Act. The end result was that civil defense was now included in the all-hazards approach to preparedness (DHS, 2007). The Oklahoma City bombing of 1995 "represented the new phase in the evolution of emergency management," raising the issue of America's preparedness for terrorism events and shifting presidential and congressional attention back toward civil defense (Haddow and Bullock (2006, 11). These events tested FEMA and set the stage for interagency competition for control of terrorism. Instead of a resolution, the Nunn-Lugar legislation of 1995 left the question of implementation open, giving responsibility to the Department of Defense because it had the necessary knowledge and assets (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 12). According to Haddow and Bullock (2006), terrorism was part of the all-hazard approach to emergency management advocated by FEMA, even though they never took a leadership role as the first responder to a terrorism incident. Because both the resources and technologies needed to address issues such as biochemical warfare and weapons of mass destruction were far beyond the reach of FEMA, they deferred to others (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 12).

In 1998, the gap in emergency management policies and practices led the United States Commission on National Security in the 21st Century to begin, "a comprehensive reexamination of the U.S. national security policies and processes in view of the changed international environment and technological, social, and intellectual changes of the late

20th Century" (Hogue and Bea, 2006, 19). Co-chaired by Senators Gary Hart (D-CO) and Warren B. Rudman (R-NH) and chartered by the Department of Defense, the committee (also known as the Hart-Rudman Commission), issued three reports between 1999 and February 2001. The reports had some fifty recommendations for governmental changes, ranging from revamping science and education, to the reorganization of the congress and its role in national security affairs (United States Commission on National Security/21st Century, 2001). Another recommendation included a proposal to create a Cabinet-level National Homeland Security Agency (NHSA). This agency would have responsibility for "planning, coordinating, and integrating various U.S. government activities involved in homeland security" (Bea 2002, 22). FEMA was considered "a key building block in this effort" accompanied by three federal agencies "on the front line of border security"- the Coast Guard, the Customs Service, and the Border Patrol (United States Commission on National Security/21st Century, 2001). They envisioned the NHSA as having three directorates-Prevention, Critical Infrastructure, and Emergency Preparedness and Response (DHS, 2009). Legislation toward this end was introduced by Representative Mac Thornberry (R-TX), which held hearings but never reported a bill(Hogue and Bea, 2006, 19).

President George W. Bush reorganized FEMA in 2001 and appointed Joseph Allbaugh, who had no prior experience in disaster management, as the director. Allbaugh had been Bush's chief of staff when he was Governor of Texas and the National Campaign Manager of Bush's 2000 election campaign (Robert, 2006, 75). The Bush administration's goal was to reorient the agency in a new direction by refocusing its efforts on civil defense and counterterrorism (Robert, 2006, 75). Meanwhile, the Office

of Management and Budget (OMB) emphasized three objectives for homeland security: counterterrorism, defense against WMD, and the protection of infrastructure (Robert, 2006). To accomplish this goal, President Bush established a Counterterrorism and National Preparedness Policy Coordinating Committee composed of four working groups: Continuity of Federal Operations, Counterterrorism and Security, Preparedness and WMD, and Information Infrastructure Protection and Assurance (Robert, 2006, 77). President Bush directed Allbaugh to form the National Domestic Preparedness Office (NDPO) with the responsibility to "coordinate all federal programs dealing with weapons of mass destruction consequence management" (Allbaugh 2001, 1). In June 2001, Allbaugh announced the functional realignment of FEMA, reporting that "the existing organization is not the best fit for the evolving mission of this agency nor does it support President Bush's restructuring and streamlining goals" (Allbaugh 2001, 1). For Allbaugh, the proposed focus on weapons of mass destructions would adversely affect FEMA's ability to respond to disaster.

Even though Allbaugh sought to "flatten the organization where possible; reduce the number of organizations reporting directly to the office of the Director; and consolidate like functions" during the reorganization process, the functional realignment of FEMA created several new organizations, including the NDPO, and combined and modified other parts of the organization (Allbaugh, 2001, 1). Moreover, President Bush came to depend heavily on FEMA to address human-caused or technology-caused calamities as well as natural disasters (Burns, 2006, 19).

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, there was a near-universal consensus within the federal government that homeland security required a major

reassessment, increased funding, and administrative reorganization. In October 8, 2001, President Bush established the Office of Homeland Security via Executive Order 13228 to "work with Executive Departments and agencies to develop and coordinate the implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to secure the United States from terrorist threats and attacks"(DHS, 2006, 4). This directive placed the Office of Homeland Security within the Executive Office of the President and made the Director the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security. President Bush chose Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge to lead the new office (DHS, 2006, 4).

During his 2002 State of the Union Address, President Bush announced the creation of the USA Freedom Corps to promote a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility in America (White House, 2002). Under the Freedom Corps initiative, the White House established the Citizen Corps within FEMA to "engage individual citizens through education, training, and volunteer service to make communities better prepared to prevent, protect, respond, and recover from all hazards" (DHS, 2006, 8). Along the same line, President Bush in March 2002 established another executive order-13260-creating the Homeland Security Advisory Council to advise the President on Homeland Security matters (White House, 2003).

On March 12, 2002, the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) was created to communicate with the American public and safety officials using a threat-based color system, so protective measures could be implemented to reduce the likelihood or impact of an attack (DHS, 2006). According to the Homeland Security National Preparedness Task Force (2006), the Bush Administration also developed a number of strategic documents and statements that outlined the President's vision for

protecting the nation. Those strategies included the National Security Strategy, the National Strategy for Homeland Security (NSHS), and the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction (Homeland Security National Preparedness Task Force, 2006, 26). As these strategies were being developed, Congress pushed for more substantial reorganization of the Federal agencies involved in Homeland Security while the President submitted his own plan for the creation of a homeland security department on June 6, 2002 (Kettl, 2004, 20). The September 11, 2001 attacks and actions taken by President Bush with the acquiescence of Congress, shifted disaster relief attention to civil defense and more precisely as a matter of national security.

After intense debate, Congress passed the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (HSA), which established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Directorate (CRS, 2005). Title V of HSA transferred the functions, personnel, resources, and authority of six existing entities, the largest of which was FEMA, into EPR (CRS, 2005). Meanwhile, section 507 of HSA specifically charged FEMA with "carrying out its mission to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the Nation from all hazards by leading and supporting the nation in a comprehensive, risk-based emergency management program" (Vina, 2002, 3). These supplemental requirements added bureaucratic layers to the flow of emergency information as well as disrupted the organizational chart of the agency (Schneider, 2006). Despire the fact that FEMA was transferred into DHS, "it was not defined as an autonomous or distinct entity within its parent organization" (Hogue and Bea, 2006, 20). Although the initial work of the department focused on addressing the threat of domestic terrorism, the DHS mandate encompassed the full range of disasters and attacks (Hogue

and Bea, 2006, 20). Within this perspective, all-hazards preparedness soon became a top priority, albeit a priority with a focus on terrorism.

In January 2003, the President named Tom Ridge as the first Secretary of the DHS. Ridge obtained increased budgetary authority and control over many of the agencies involved in homeland security (Cong. Rec., 2006, 55). The DHS inherited approximately 200,000 employees from 22 federal agencies and an initial budget of $37 billion (DHS, 2006). On March 1, 2003, FEMA's functions were transferred to the DHS. Secretary Ridge used his reorganization authority to consolidate organizational units and reallocate functions within DHS. Some of the changes such as *select grant* under Section 502 and 503 of the Homeland Security Act were consolidated within the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness, an office that would report directly to the Secretary (DHS, 2004). In December 2003, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8: National Preparedness (HSPD-8) was issued. The directive defined preparedness as encompassing, "threatened or actual domestic terrorist attacks, major disasters, and other emergencies" (Homeland Security National Preparedness Task Force, 2006, 28). With this broad directive, the DHS assessed how federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector resources worked together to address emergencies. The assessment led to the development of a new National Response Plan (NRP) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS) (Homeland Security National Preparedness Task Force, 2006, 28). The NRP was designed to establish framework for how federal agencies would interact with each other and with state, local and tribal governments, and also with the private sector and nongovernment organizations. This plan defines and specifies roles and responsibilities for domestic incident prevention,

preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery activities (Goodman, et al., 2007, 267). The NIMS ensures that all level of government works from the same playbook during a disaster. It main principle is one incident, one commander, no matter how many agencies send help (Cooper and Block, 2007, 278). The federal government requires local government to adopt NIMS in order to be eligible for federal preparedness grant.

FEMA's organizational components (especially preparedness) came to the forefront under Ridge's successor Michael Chertoff. Before joining DHS, Chertoff served as judge on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. Upon taking office in February 2005, Chertoff initiated a systematic evaluation of the Department's operations, policies and structures (DHS, 2005). This initiative, known as the Second Stage Review (2SR) resulted in a six-point agenda: (1) to increase preparedness with a focus on catastrophic events; (2) to strengthen border security and interior enforcement and reform immigration processes; (3) to harden transportation security without sacrificing mobility; (4) to enhance information sharing with U.S. government and private sector partners; (5) to improve DHS financial human resources, procurement, and information technology management; and finally (6) to realign the DHS's organization to maximize mission performance (Homeland Security National Preparedness Task Force, 2006,30). The goal of this six-point agenda was to increase the DHS's ability to prepare, prevent, and respond to terrorist attacks and other emergencies. The DHS's agenda focused primarily on terrorism/civil defense to the exclusion of natural disasters. This review also resulted in the creation of a new Directorate of Preparedness (DP). Most functions originally housed in the EPR Directorate were transferred to this new directorate. Meanwhile, the

remaining components of EPR and FEMA focused on response and recovery, and not on preparation (CRS-Report RL 33064).

According to Hogue and Bea (2006, 21), Chertoff's implementation of the reorganization proposal was not universally accepted. The National Emergency Management Association (NEMA), composed of state and county level emergency directors, criticized the proposed reorganization. The association noted that it would be a mistake to separate disaster planning from response. In the midst of all these concerns, Congress approved the division of responsibility of CEM functions but did not enact the legislation to change the structure of FEMA (Hogue and Bea 2006, 22). It addressed the Administration's reorganization plan during the FY 2006 appropriation process, which was underway at the time Chertoff's initiative was announced (Hogue and Bea 2006, 22).

Since Congress did not enact legislation to change the structure of FEMA, Director Michael Brown, who took office in 2003, held the title of Under Secretary for Federal Emergency Management and reported directly to the Secretary (Hogue and Bea 2006, 22). He oversaw three divisions (Response, Mitigation, and Recovery), ten regional offices, and numerous other components (GAO, 2006, 614). In addition, emergency preparedness functions were vested in DP, which he also headed with no experience in emergency management (Miskel, 2006, 30). By shifting many preparedness tasks to the DP, the Bush Administration left FEMA as a response agency for rescue and clean-up (Shane, 2005).

The fears expressed about FEMA's separation of disaster planning from response came true once Hurricane Katrina, a Category Three storm, struck the Gulf Coast on August 28, 2005. Katrina made landfall in Southeast Louisiana and the Louisiana-

Mississippi border, causing severe and catastrophic damage all along the Gulf Coast. The storm destroyed the cities of Bay St. Louis, Waveland, and Biloxi/Gulfport in Mississippi as well as Mobile, Alabama, and Slidell, Louisiana (Miskel, 2006, 94). The levees that separated Lake Pontchartrain and several canals from New Orleans were breached a few days later, flooding eighty percent of the city and many areas of neighboring parishes for weeks (Freedberg and Syndney, 2005, 3). An estimated 1,836 people lost their lives in Hurricane Katrina and subsequent floods, making it the deadliest U.S. hurricane since the 1928 Okeechobee Hurricane (Miskel, 2006, 94). In addition, the storm is estimated to have been responsible for $81.2 billion in damage, making it the costliest national disaster in U.S. history (Miskel, 2006, 95). Under the leadership of Michael Brown, FEMA performed miserably during Hurricane Katrina.

Major problems developed during the governmental response to Katrina largely because emergency management officials at the local, state, and federal levels did not follow federal guidelines, procedures and processes (Schneider, 2007, 1). For example, the ODP, whose duty is to pay exclusive attention to state and local first responders such as police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel, failed to communicate and coordinate response teams. Since ODP money could only be used for terrorism preparedness, emergency managers, local officials, and first responders in Louisiana and Mississippi could not access funds for natural disaster preparedness (Miskel, 2006, 98). According to Schneider (2007, 9), FEMA exemplified several “bureaucratic pathologies” during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Ambiguous mission and personnel problems, faltering mobilization, bureaucratic rigidity, and red tape all contributed to FEMA’s poor response (Schneider, 2007, 12-20). Hurricane Katrina revealed FEMA’s weak

organizational structure and leadership. In regard to disaster relief policy, Hurricane Katrina shifted the attention back to natural disasters. Therefore, this tragedy brings back how disaster relief policy should be defined in the United States.

Conclusion

The preceding indicates that the history of civil defense and natural disaster involves myriad policy and organizational changes. Those changes have been driven by a variety of factors: (1) potential nuclear attacks, (2) devastating natural and man-made disasters, (3) congressional mandates, and (4) the specific preferences of presidential administrations. As a punctuating event, Hurricane Katrina shifted and challenged the policy process, actors, organizations, and institutions. Following its aftermath, committees in both chambers of Congress and the Bush Administration conducted investigations into governmental failures during the preparation for and response to disaster. While DHS conducted an internal review and the White House assessed the role of governmental response to Hurricane Katrina, Congress introduced legislation and held hearings that dealt with disaster relief policy. Since congressional committees serve as the legislative anchor for the subsystem, the following chapters map how they govern the agenda of disaster relief policy over the post-war era.

Chapter Four

Tracking Agenda Status

The preceding chapters discuss the historical development of disaster relief in the U.S., and how this development vacillates between two fronts: civil defense and natural disasters. Given that disasters are unpredictable with respect both to their occurrence and their outcome, the government is left in a predicament about whether to act, when to act, and what action to take to manage these disasters (Birkland, 1997; McEntire, 1998; Dara et al. 2005). This chapter seeks to understand this shift by focusing on bill introductions as the first of two ways in which Congress governs the agenda of disaster relief over the post-war era. The purpose of this chapter is three-fold. First, I develop an indicator of the institutional agenda by examining the ebb and flow of bill introductions in both the House and the Senate over the post-war period in the policy areas of natural disaster and civil defense. I provide a snapshot of the overall level of activity, as well as highlight periods of increased salience in both policy areas. Second, I examine the composition of legislation in an effort to decipher the topics that receive attention and the shift in issue framing. Third, I examine the referral of legislation to highlight the dynamics of policy jurisdiction. Examining referrals enables one to identify not only committee competition, but also highlight periods of policy monopoly.

For ease of presentation, I break this mapping down into three sections--- civil defense, disaster relief, and a conclusion that compares the two. Each section is guided by three questions: “When did the issue get on the agenda?” “What facet of the issue receives attention?” and “Who exercises jurisdictional control?”

4.1. Mapping the Civil Defense Agenda

The data on legislative introductions were gathered using the *Congressional Bills Project*, as well as the *THOMAS* search engine. Concurrent, joint resolutions, and public bills were included in the counts. The *Congressional Bills Project* data were gathered under two broad categories: civil defense and homeland security. The database specified the examples of categories as "radiological emergency planning," "civil reserve air fleet," "federal civil defense act," "effect of limited nuclear warfare," "federal fallout shelter construction," " civil defense air raid shelter program," " civil defense for national survival," and " civil air patrol." A *THOMAS* subject search using the key term "civil defense" and "Homeland Security and related functions" was conducted in order to double check bills introduced between 1973 and 2005.

The civil defense search produced 298 bills introduced between 1947 and 2005 (171 in the House and 127 in the Senate).

Figure 4.1: Number of House and Senate Bills Introduced on the subject of Civil Defense from 1947-2005

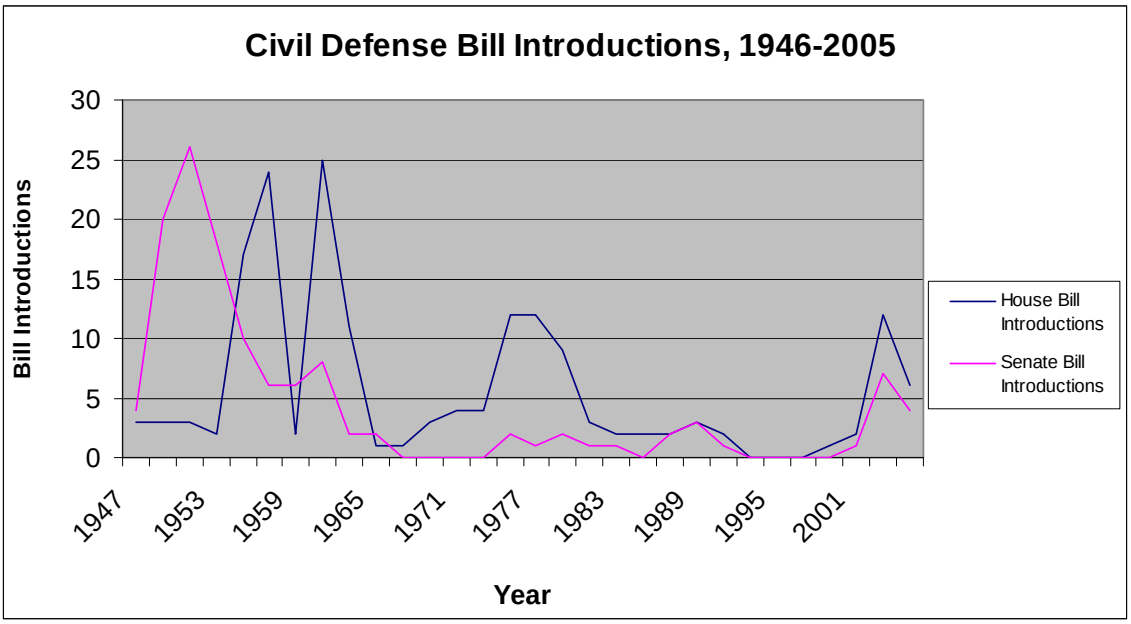


Figure 4.1 indicates that interest in the issue has lessened over time and across the House and the Senate. There has been more activity in the House than in the Senate, and the patterns of activity across both chambers have also differed. Interest in the House grows at a steady pace and peaks in 1957, 1963, 1977 and 2004. The sharp peak in 1953 could be explained by President Eisenhower's decision to support a mass evacuation policy instead of a shelter program initiated under the Truman administration. Partly responsible for the increase was the denotation of a hydrogen bomb by the Soviet Union in 1953, which renewed congressional attention to civil defense matters. The interest as it relates to the jump seems to be associated with congressional intent to establish a civilian department within the Department of Defense, known as the Department of Civil Defense, to provide stockpiling, storage, and distribution of food supply to the civilian population that would be evacuated from the devastated areas in the event of an attack on the U.S. Unlike the House, the peak in Senate activity occurred in early 1953. The activity surge appears to coincide with the passing of the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950 that allocated significant funding for shelter initiatives. The Senate activity, however, decreased after 1953 and regained a peak in 2005 following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

The increase in activity in the House in 1977 coincides with the amendment of the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950. The act allocated significant funding for shelter initiative and placed the majority of the civil defense responsibilities on individual states. The peak in 1979 prompted by the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant corresponds with congressional demands that various civil defense agencies be combined into one coherent agency in direct contact with the White House. There is a virtual

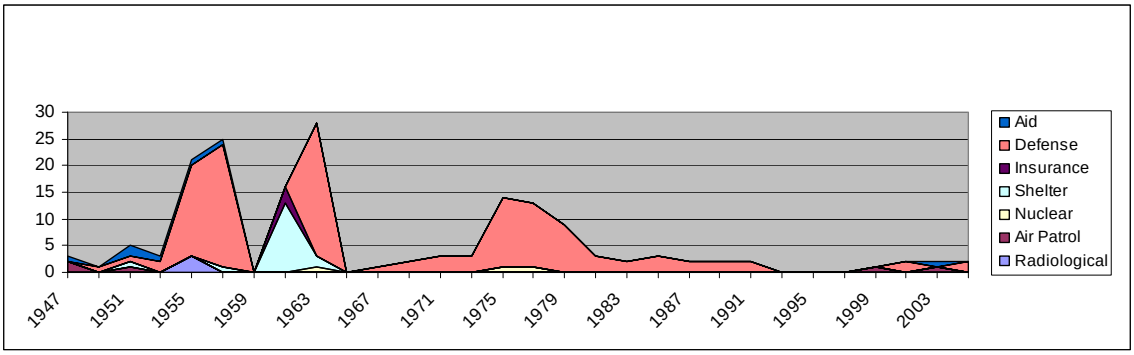
absence of civil defense bills between 1991 and 1999, associated with the end of the Cold War.

Civil defense again became prominent on the agenda corresponding with the attacks of September 11, 2001. This increase in legislative activity in both chambers is no doubt a product of the attack and produced the Homeland Security Act, which established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), as well as the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) directorate.

To try to approximate the dimension of attention civil defense receives, I have developed a coding system based on bill titles and or summary remarks found in the *Congressional Bills Project* and *THOMAS.* In view of the two broad categories, civil defense and homeland security, bills coded *Aid* include legislation dealing with appropriations for civil defense programs. *Defense* includes legislation that discusses the establishment of a Federal Department of Civil Defense and other purposes. *Insurance* includes legislation that discusses provisions/compensation to states and local government in case of an attack, miscalculation or accident. *Shelter* contains legislation that specifically seeks to address efforts to minimize casualties. *Nuclear* includes legislation that discusses the study of special civil defense needs in areas which contain significant elements of the United States' strategic nuclear retaliatory forces. *Air Patrol* includes legislation that discusses the establishment of a civil air patrol as a civilian auxiliary. *Radiological* contains legislation that seeks to address the purchase by the Federal Civil Defense Administrator of certain radiological detection instruments, devices, and equipments. I chose these search terms to reflect the names of the categories that appeared in the database.

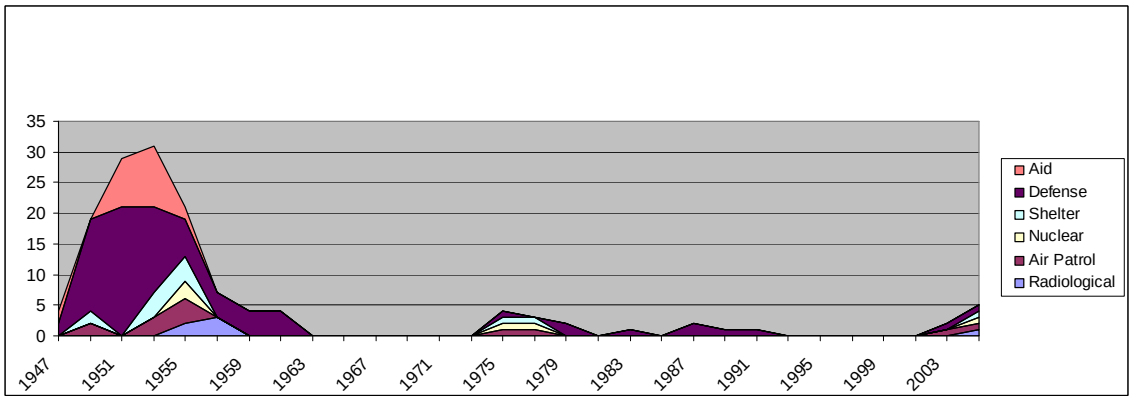
Figure 4.2 (House) and Figure 4.3 (Senate), explore the answer to the second main research question: “What facet of the issue receives attention?”

Figure 4.2: Civil Defense Bill Content: House



From 1947 to 1951, aid, air patrol, and defense received modest attention in these immediate years following World War II. For the most part, in the House, most of the civil defense related proposals centered on defense. Also in the House there seems to be no attention to any particular issue in 1995. This is no surprise, since September 11, 2001, renewed attention considering mix of issues. In 2003, during the 108th Congress, there is a slight shift in attention from defense to the topics of aid and insurance. Such a shift is indicative of the damages incurred during 9/11.

Figure 4.3: Civil Defense Bill Content: Senate



An examination of figure 4.3 suggests that between 1947 and 1959, the Senate deals with a mix of issues similar to those of the House. The chart in figure 4.3 shows an increase from 1947 reaching a peak in 1953, and the beginning of a decline in 1956. Civil Defense disappears on the Senate agenda in 1963, picking up again in 1975. The issue was non-existent on the Senate agenda, and also absent on the President's agenda, which is consistent with the President's role in setting the foreign policy agenda. Upon his assumption of office following Kennedy's assassination, President Johnson marked the beginning of his administration by dramatically cutting back funding of the nation's civil defense program. The cutback in funding not only affected the continuation of the program, but civil defense issues also began to fall slowly from the institutional radar. Typical of this lack of interest was the administration's refusal to pressure Congress to pass the *Shelter Incentive Program*, which proposed to provide every non-profit institution with financial compensation for each shelter it built.

The Nixon administration redefined civil defense policy to include preparedness for natural disasters. The redefined civil defense policy continued under the Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush and Clinton administrations enshrined in the "dual-use preparedness approach" in which civil defense funding could be used for natural disaster mitigation and preparedness.

Between 1995 and 2001 the issue dropped off the agenda, and then received a surge of attention following 9/11. The surge is associated with the pressing concern with counter-terrorism as was the case in the House. It is worth noting that from 1946 until the end of the analysis period, insurance is not addressed in the Senate. This might be due to the broader discussion of disaster relief policy.

Three observations stand out. First, the focus over time is one in which defense dominates the discussion. Second, an increase in bill introduction activity is associated with a more varied discussion. Third, the increase in bill introductions in 2003 is associated with a mixture of concerns on the agenda in both chambers. This can partly be explained by the salient event of 9/11 and the attention given to it by the two chambers.

Having observed how civil defense got on the institutional agenda, the next question to examine is "Who exercises jurisdictional control?" Bill referrals are both a means of maintaining control as well as a means of expanding jurisdiction (Worsham, 1997, 70). As King (1997) has documented, controlling referrals is essential to preserving turf. Figures 4.4 and 4.5, map the referral of legislation in both the House and Senate.

Figure 4.4: House Civil Defense Bill Referral: Committee Competition

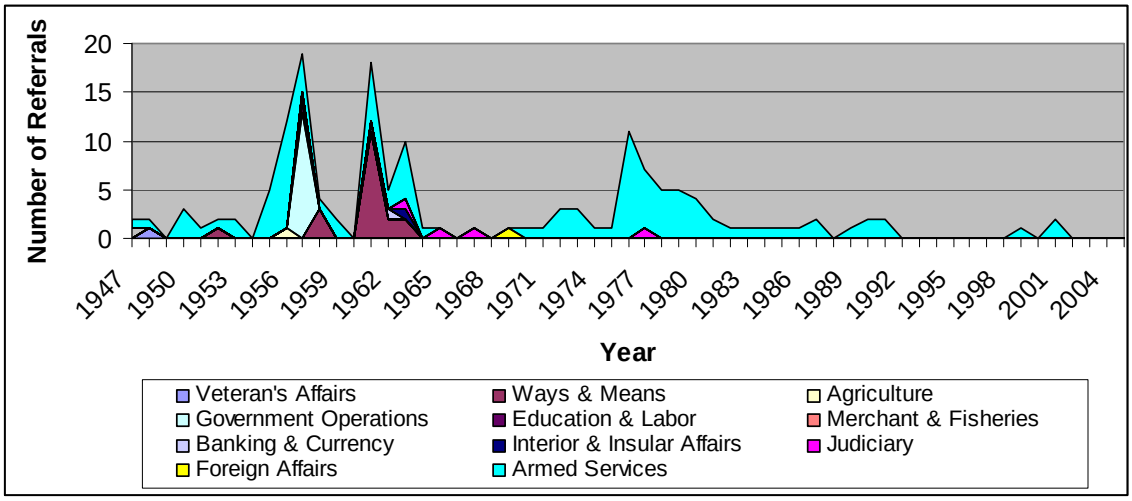
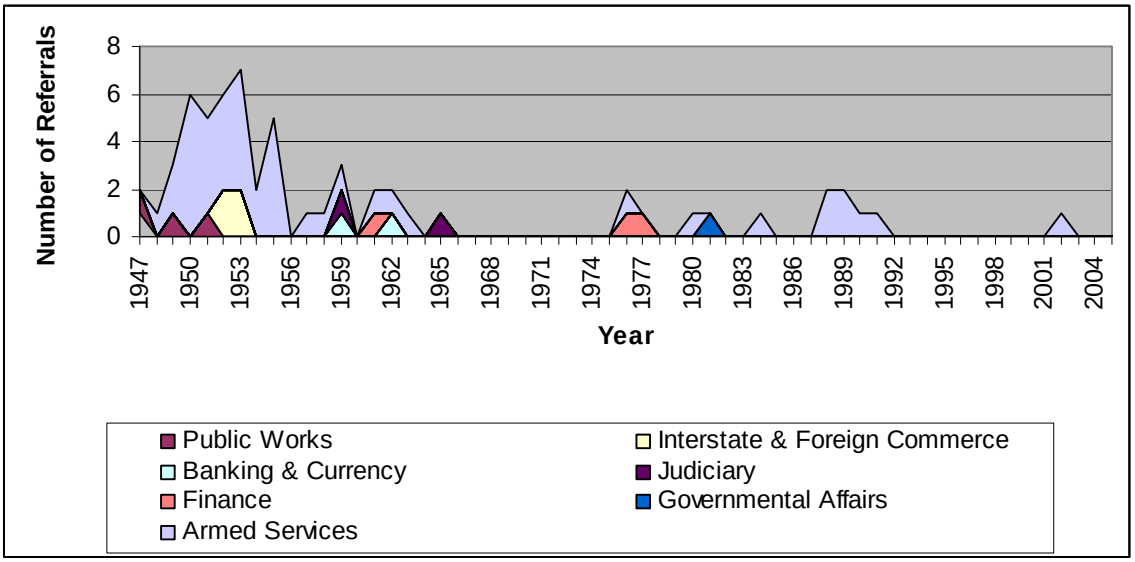


Figure 4.5: Senate Civil Defense Bill Referral: Committee Competition



A review of figures 4.4 and 4.5 reveals that the civil defense policy domain in both chambers conforms to the traditional dominant coalition scenario at times, with periods of competition in the 1950s and the 1960s. As the destination of legislation in the House, the Armed Services committee in 1950s and 1960s experienced competition in which the Interior Committee, the Judiciary Committee, the Government Operation Committee and Ways and Means act as rival venues. Most of the proposals during this competition questioned the U.S. civil defense preparedness emergency management. By 1971, competition in the House is non-existent, indicating the decline in the level of attention.

Like in the House, the Armed Services Committee in the Senate encounters competition in the 1950s and 1960s, when some legislation is referred to the Public Works Committee. This competition remains until 1965, when legislation is referred to additional committees such as Banking, Judiciary, and Interior. However, competition

vanishes after 1968 with sporadic appearance in 1977 and 1980. In addition, attention to the issue disappears completely in the periods 1968 through 1974 and 1993 through 2001

It appears that the creation of FEMA, the provisions of 1980, the 1988 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, the 2000 Disaster Mitigation Act, and the attacks of September 11, 2001, all function as a shock to the system. In some measure, we see that these interruptions are reflective of negative feedback because the initial disruption becomes smaller as it works its way through time (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 6). Besides a minor degree of competition, the Armed Services Committee in both chambers is the dominant venue for referrals throughout the epoch under study. To reinforce the argument of a policy monopoly being secured by the Armed Services committee, figures 4.4 and 4.5 present a Herfindahl index score of each chamber.

A Herfindahl index score is calculated by squaring the proportion of committees holding referrals in the policy realm and then summing the squares of those proportions. The result is an index score that ranges from zero to one. A score close to zero indicates referrals are spread out among a large number of committee, while a score of one indicates that a single committee holds all the referrals (Worsham, 2004). Indices were constructed for each year in order to offer a longitudinal measure of referral competition in both chambers. As figures 4.4 and 4.5 reveal, both chambers exhibit periods of perfect monopoly.

Figure 4.6: House Herfindahl Index: Turf Monopoly

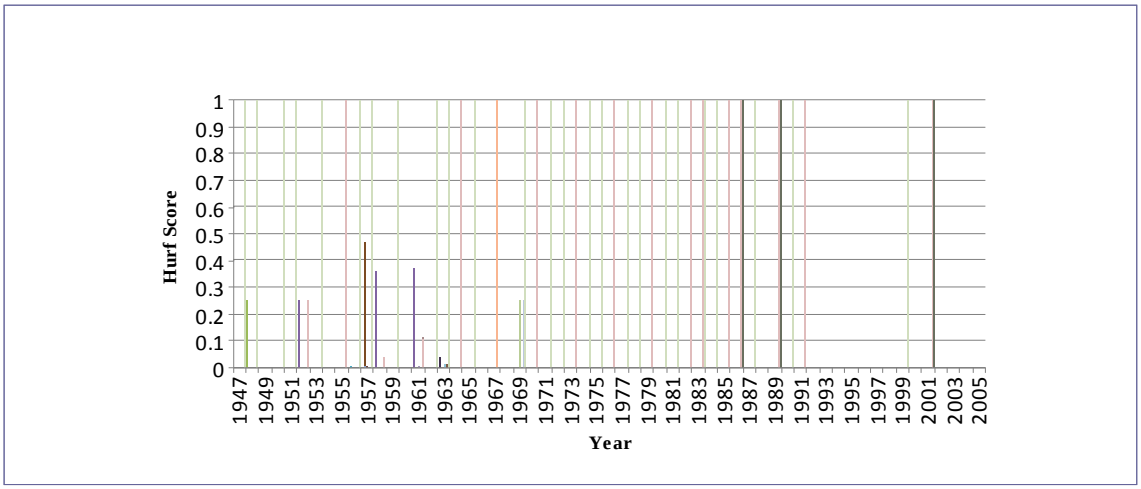
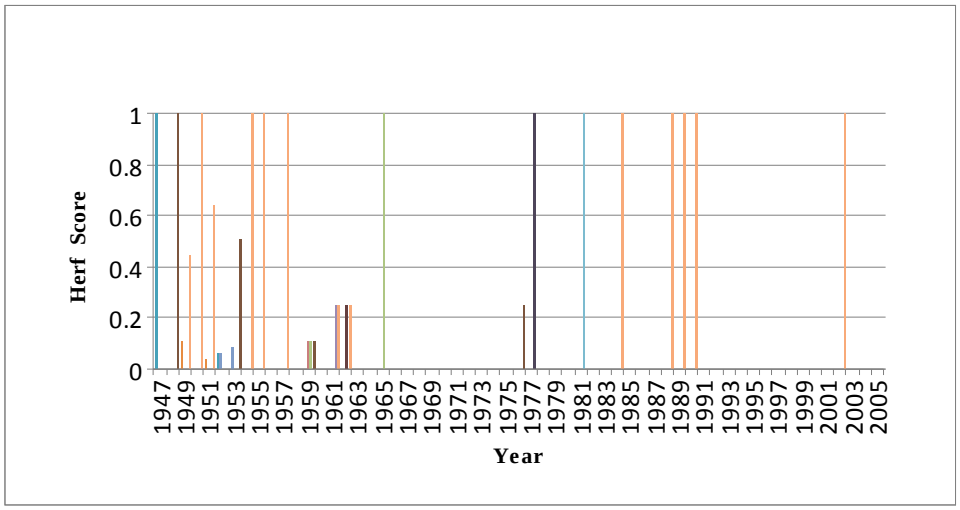


Figure 4.7: Senate Herfindahl Index: Turf Monopoly



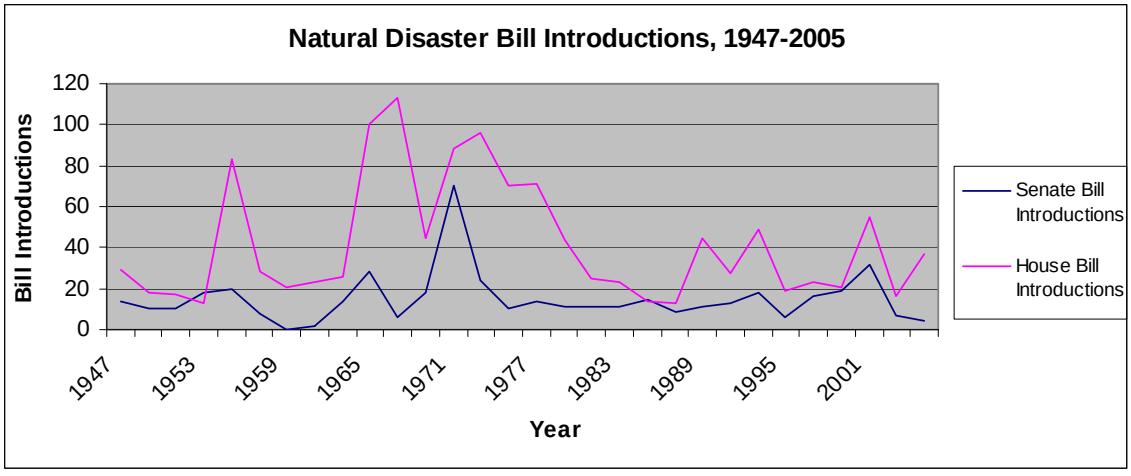
At the macro-level, we can conclude that the level of attention to civil defense and the degree of committee competition was at its apex from 1947 to 1965. The decline in the level of attention and committee competition over the next decades ushers the end of the Cold War and the introduction of intensive precautionary measures during the aftermath of a disaster. In the following section, I turn my attention to the natural disaster agenda and compare its patterns of activity to that of civil defense.

4.2. Mapping the Natural Disaster Agenda

As was the case for civil defense, the data on legislative introductions were gathered using the *Congressional Bills Project* as well as the *THOMAS* search engine. The *Congressional Bills Project* data were gathered under one main category-Domestic Disaster Relief. The database specified examples of the main category of Domestic Disaster Relief as "aid for flood disasters," "national flood insurance reform," "earthquake preparedness," "FEMA disaster planning and relief operations," "FEMA national fire academy training programs," "SBA disaster loans, interest rate on disaster loans," "emergency credit extension to farmers in disaster areas," "hurricane protection projects," "drought relief," "establishment of a national fire academy." A *THOMAS* subject search using the key term "disaster" was conducted in order to double check bills introduced between 1973 and 2005 of the *Congressional Bills Project*.

The search produced 1,701 bills, 1,252 in the House and 449 in the Senate. Figure 4.8 tracks the number of bills introduced on the subject of disaster relief.

Figure 4.8: **Number of House and Senate Bills Introduced on the subject of Natural Disaster from 1947-2005**



As figure 4.8 indicates, disaster relief emerges on the agenda of both chambers after 1947. By 1955, the frequency of bill introduction on natural disaster increased in both chambers. That attention is coupled with the passing of the 1956 Federal Flood Insurance Act that provides federal disaster relief insurance and reinsurance. The Senate experienced a gradual decline in 1963 but rose gradually between 1965 and 1971. As compared to the Senate, activity in the House remains relatively active for the next five years. This surge of activity in the 1960s corresponds with the shift from viewing disaster as an *Act of God* to a nonstructural mitigation; thus, denoting the use of wetlands to buffer against flooding as well as the use of landscaping to protect structures from flooding or wildfires (Sylves, 2008, 51). This shift in view is also due in part to the series of flooding in California, Oregon, Washington, Nevada and hurricanes in Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi. In addition, the surge in activity might be attributed to President Nixon's administration's poor performance in the aftermath of Hurricane Camille in August 1969 (Sylves, 2008, 52).

The flow of Congressional activities in 1973 concurs with the series of devastating tornadoes that hit six Midwestern States. This stream of activities echoed the need to add individual and family assistance to the disaster relief program. This consideration was coupled with the passing of the Disaster Relief Act of 1974. This expanded relief assistance to individual disaster victims, offered assistance for the reconstruction of public facilities, and authorized the President to provide economic recovery assistance after the period of emergency aid and replacement of essential facilities and services. Although Congress passed the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, it never funded it and the act was repealed in 1998 (Bea, 2005).

By passing the Disaster Relief Act of 1974, Congress advocated a multi-hazard, or an all hazard approach, to emergency management, thus signaling the diminution of civil defense issues, funding, and concerns in the realm of domestic emergency management. This decrease of attention in civil defense continued for twenty more years until the Federal Civil Defense Act was repealed in 1994 (Sylves, 2008). By repealing the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, all remnants of civil defense authority were transferred to Title VI of the Stafford Act. The Stafford Act gave FEMA the responsibility to coordinate a comprehensive emergency preparedness system for all types of disasters. In addition, Title VI ended all Armed Services Committee oversight over FEMA and the money authorized by the Civil Defense Act was reallocated to natural disaster and all hazard programs (Sylves, 2008).

The Senate bill introductions follow a slightly different pattern than the House. From 1975 to 1999, Senate legislative activities declined steadily, while the House experienced fluctuations in the sense that its activities declined slightly in 1987, but increased in 1993 before then decreasing in 1995. The House activities continued to fluctuate until 2000. The Senate's lack of activities between 1979 and 1989 reflect their concern about the use of disaster authority for responding to non-natural disaster or emergencies, such as managing the Cuban refugee influx and the Three Mile Island incident (Figure 3.6), (Haddow and Bullock, 2006, 6). This ebb and flow of activity in both chambers reflect the public outrage over the 1978 Three Mile Island Incident, the creation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency in 1979, the 1988 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, and finally the 2000 Disaster Mitigation Act. After FEMA's poor response in the aftermath of disasters that occurred

between 1989 and 1999, congressional activities did not increase radically. Bills introduced in both chambers during this time period centered on the reorganization of FEMA. It is not until the end of the 1999 that we see a noticeable surge in legislative activities. This surge overlaps with the passing of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, which modifies the Stafford Act by establishing a national program for pre-disaster mitigation, streamlining administration of disaster relief, and controlling federal costs of disaster assistance. Clearly, the extraordinary level of attention in both chambers between 2001 and 2003 is attributed to the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001.

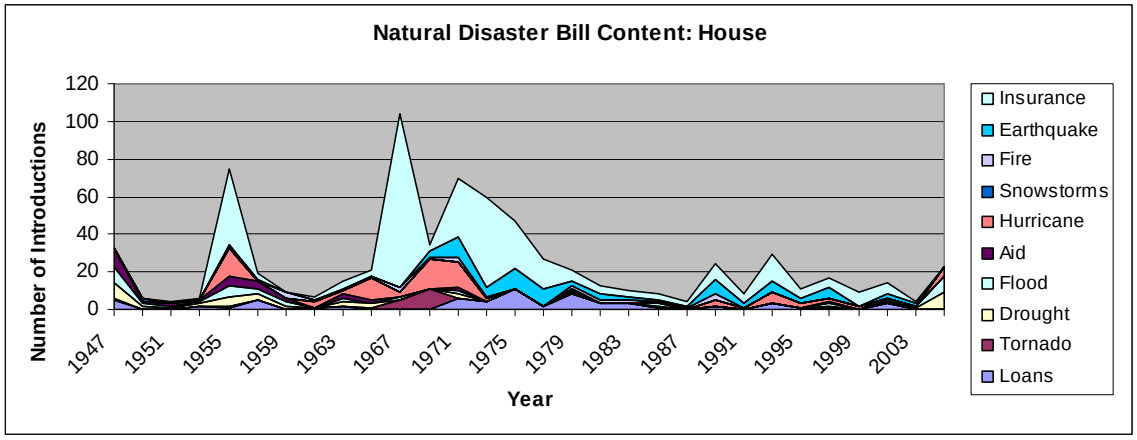
Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, there is a near-universal agreement within both chambers that homeland security required a major re-assessment, an increase in funding, and an administrative reorganization (Allbaugh, 2001, 1). The peak in activities in both chambers mirror the push for more substantial reorganization of the federal agencies involved in Homeland Security. This increase relates to the passing of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (HAS), which establishes the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) including the Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) Directorate. In 2003, FEMA became part of DHS and in July 12, 2005, DHS was reorganized with FEMA as an independent agency within the Department. Given FEMA's poor performance during and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, it is reasonable to see an increase in legislative activities.

To determine which area of natural disaster receives attention, I developed a coding instrument by coding legislation based on bill titles and or summary remarks found in the *Congressional Bills Project* and *THOMAS*. Bills coded *insurance* includes legislation dealing with provisions for national insurance for victims of natural disasters.

Earthquake includes legislation that discusses existing building and infrastructure structures, which protect occupants against seismic forces. *Fire, Snowstorms, Hurricane, Flood, Tornado, and Drought* legislation discusses damages and assistance measures for affected peoples. *Aid* includes legislation that discusses response plans of states and local government affected by natural disasters. *Loans* contain legislation that addresses government financed loans to help not only small businesses, but also individuals, businesses of all sizes and nonprofits reestablish after a natural disaster.

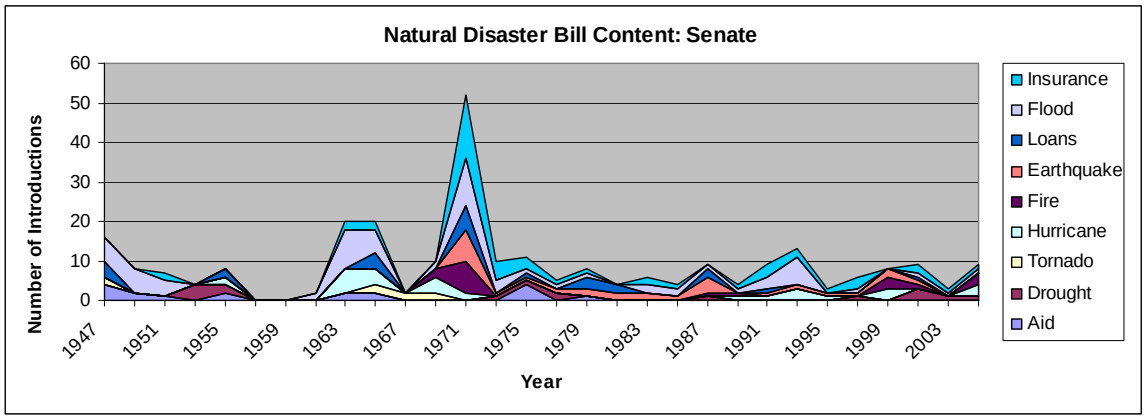
Figures 4.9 (House) and Figure 4.10 (Senate) illustrate the topics that receive attention on the agenda in both chambers.

Figure 4.9: Natural Disaster Bill Content: House



A review of Figure 4.9 and 4.10 show that for the most part, both chambers place attention on a mix of issues. Evident in both chambers, insurance issues dominate the natural disaster agenda between 1963 and 1987. This is indicative of the overlapping funding of civil defense and natural disaster in the policy domain. Despite the disastrous magnitude of Hurricane Katrina, there is a slight increase of attention to the subject of hurricane and flooding in both chambers.

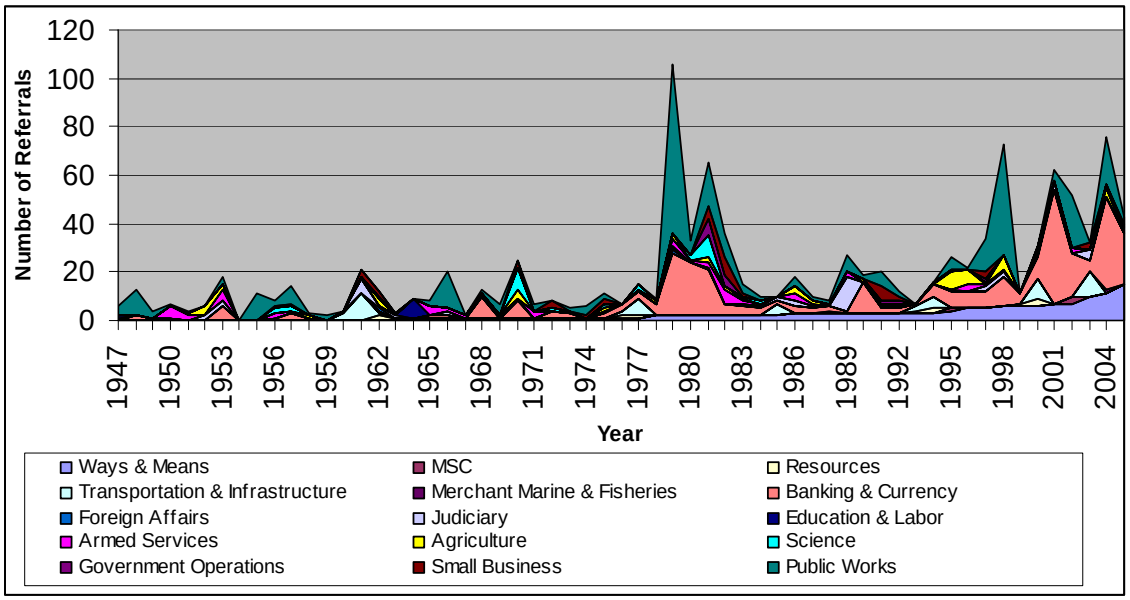
Figure 4.10: Natural Disaster Bill Content: Senate



In essence, as Figures 4.9 and 4.10 indicate, the study time frame is characterized by an increase in issue topics, with insurance receiving the majority of attention.

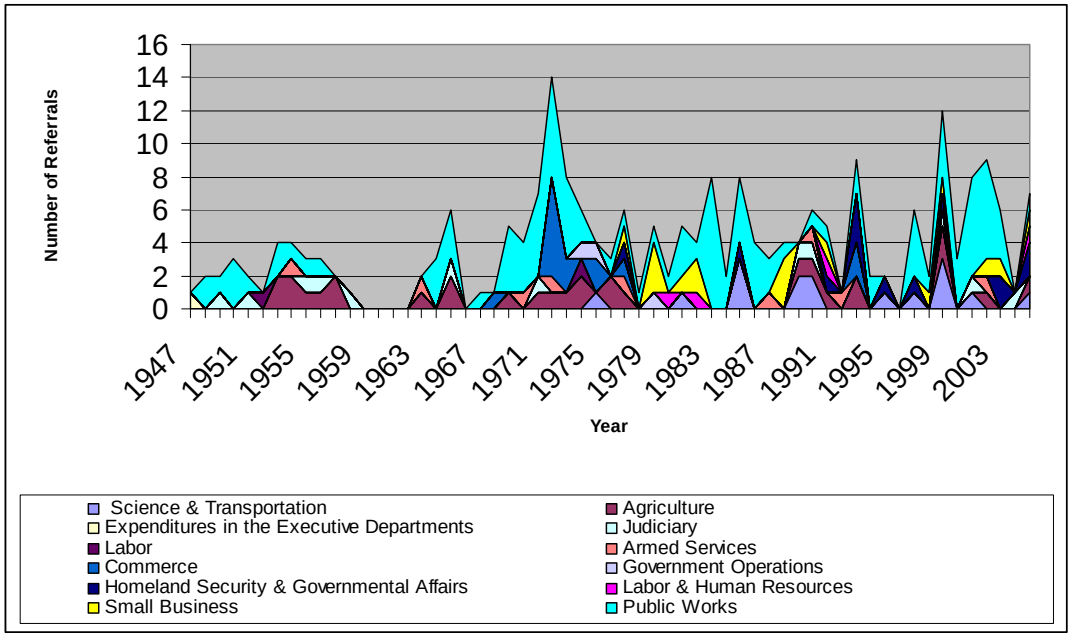
Overall, in both chambers, legislative introductions associated with natural disaster policy appear to follow a cycle. Four observations stand out. First, the modest increase of activities focus on preventive measures**.** Second, the increase of activities surrounding bill introduction activity in both chambers are associated with the end of the Cold War, as well as the debate over flooding as an *Act of God* or man-induced. Third, the slight surge of bill introductions especially in the House coincide with the demand for the coordination of disaster response, FEMA. And finally, the abrupt decline of bill introductions is associated with a diversion toward issues related to counter-terrorism. Having mapped the disaster relief agenda, the following figure examines the issue of jurisdictional control.

Figure 4.11: House Natural Disaster Bill Referral: Committee Competition



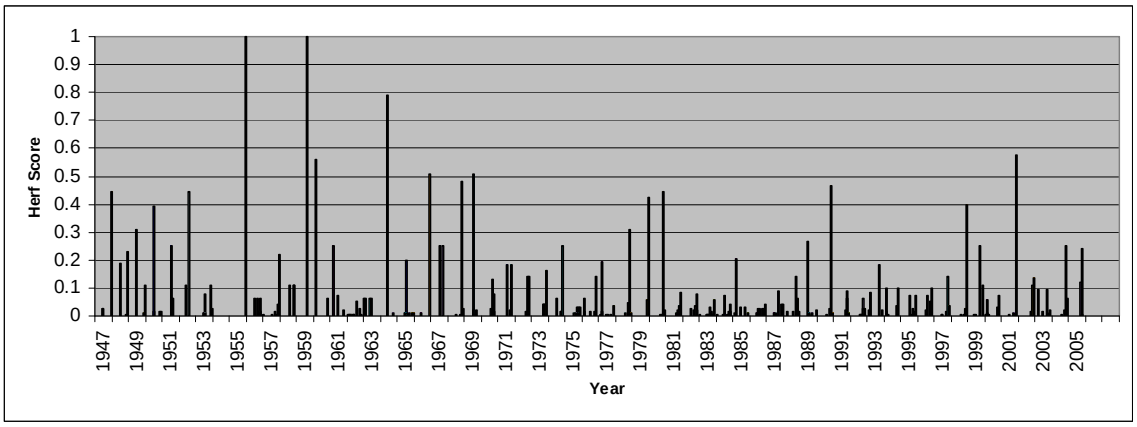
A review of figures 4.11 and 4.12 reveal that the policy domain of natural disaster in both chambers reflects a competitive coalition scenario. Not a single committee is the primary venue as the destination of legislation. Fifteen committees in the House and a dozen in the Senate are regular players in the policy realm, with competition the norm during any particular year.

Figure 4.12: Senate Natural Disaster Bill Referral: Committee Competition



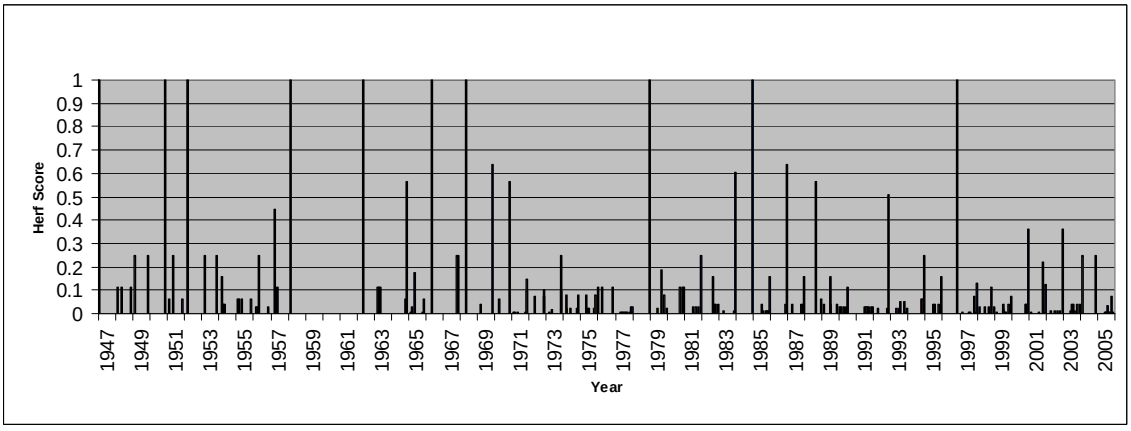
To reinforce the argument that the policy domain experiences competition, Figure 4.13 and 4.14 present a Herfindahl index score of each chamber.

Figure 4.13: House Herfindahl Index: Turf Monopoly



As illustrated by figures 4.13 and 4.14, referral of natural disaster proposals resides within the jurisdiction of various committees. For example, the Senate with a Herf score below .3 is a reflection of intense competition.

Figure 4:14: Senate Herfindahl Index: Turf Monopoly

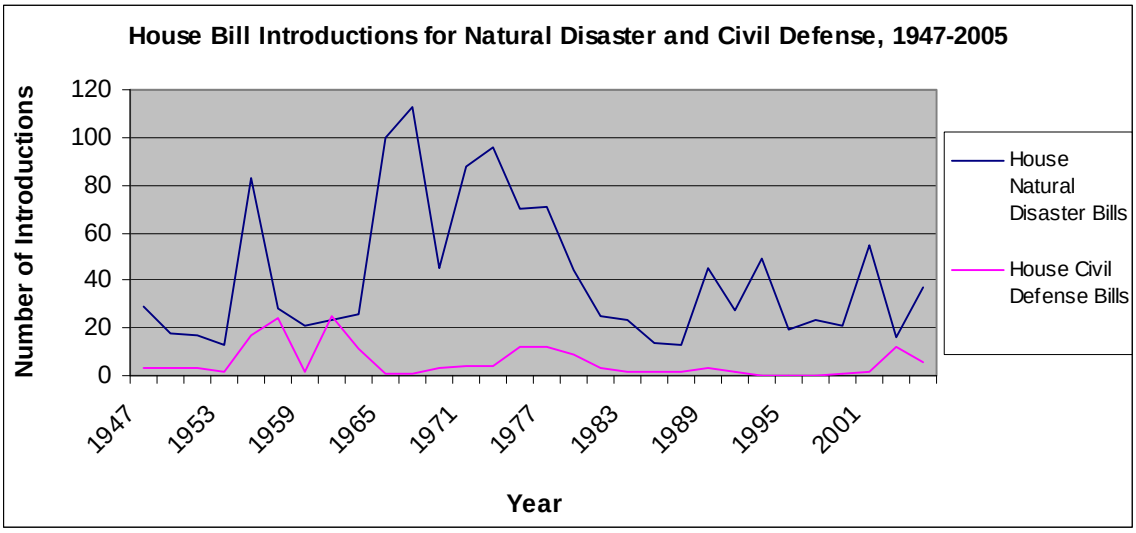


So far, I have established that not a single committee maintains a policy monopoly over the referral of introduction throughout most of the period of analysis. Also, competition arises as disaster serves as shocks to the system. As such, to examine how the frame of disaster relief policy shifts, the two dominant images are thus compared.

Comparison of the two dominant images of disaster relief

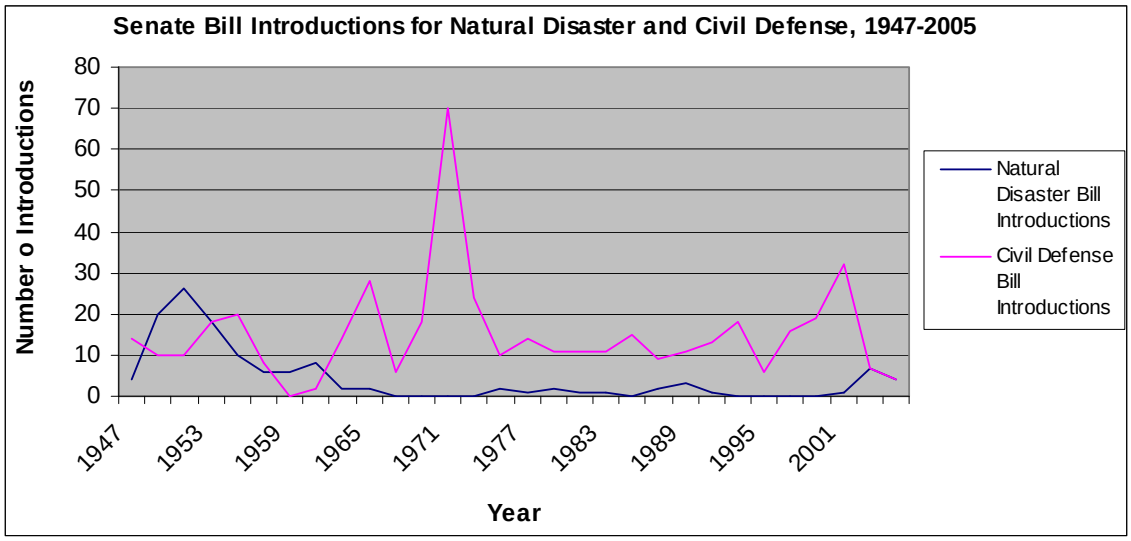
After mapping the civil defense and natural disaster agendas, it is clear that the image of disaster relief has shifted in the U.S. between 1946 and 2005. When comparing the number of bills introduced on both topics (figure 4.15), the House focuses primarily on natural disaster issues, while civil defense issues are barely noticeable. This attention to natural disaster corresponds with punctuating events such as Hurricane Camille (1969), Hurricane Agnes (1972), the Great Midwest Flood (1993) and the Northridge Earthquake (1994).

Figure 4.15: House Bills Introductions of Natural Disaster and Civil Defense



On the other hand, the Senate (figure 4.16), focuses primarily on civil defense issues while natural disaster issues are virtually absent. The Senate attention to civil defense does not necessarily correlate with punctuating events, except in the case of the 9/11 attacks. For example, the peak in 1974 is associated with the debate regarding an all-hazards approach to emergency management.

Figure 4.16: Senate Bills Introductions of Natural Disaster and Civil Defense



Three explanations may account for the above observations. First, given that state and local governments are first responders to disasters, governors, congressional representatives, and policymakers, have to ensure that sizeable federal resources are allocated to their state for post-disaster redevelopment (Sylves, 2008). Second, when it comes to wartime threats to national security, Larson et al. (2001) argue that the Senate has always taken the lead in the matter because it has to address its budgetary aggregate. Third, media attention, budget data and presidential attention could possibly explain the shift in attention and salience in each policy domain. To further explore these observations, I conducted a comparison between the series and ran a correlation by

tracking bill introductions and presidential attention. Presidential attention is measured by counting the number of times Presidents mention “civil defense” and “natural disaster’ in their State of the Union Address.

Figure 4.17: Bill Introductions and Presidential State of the Union: Natural Disaster

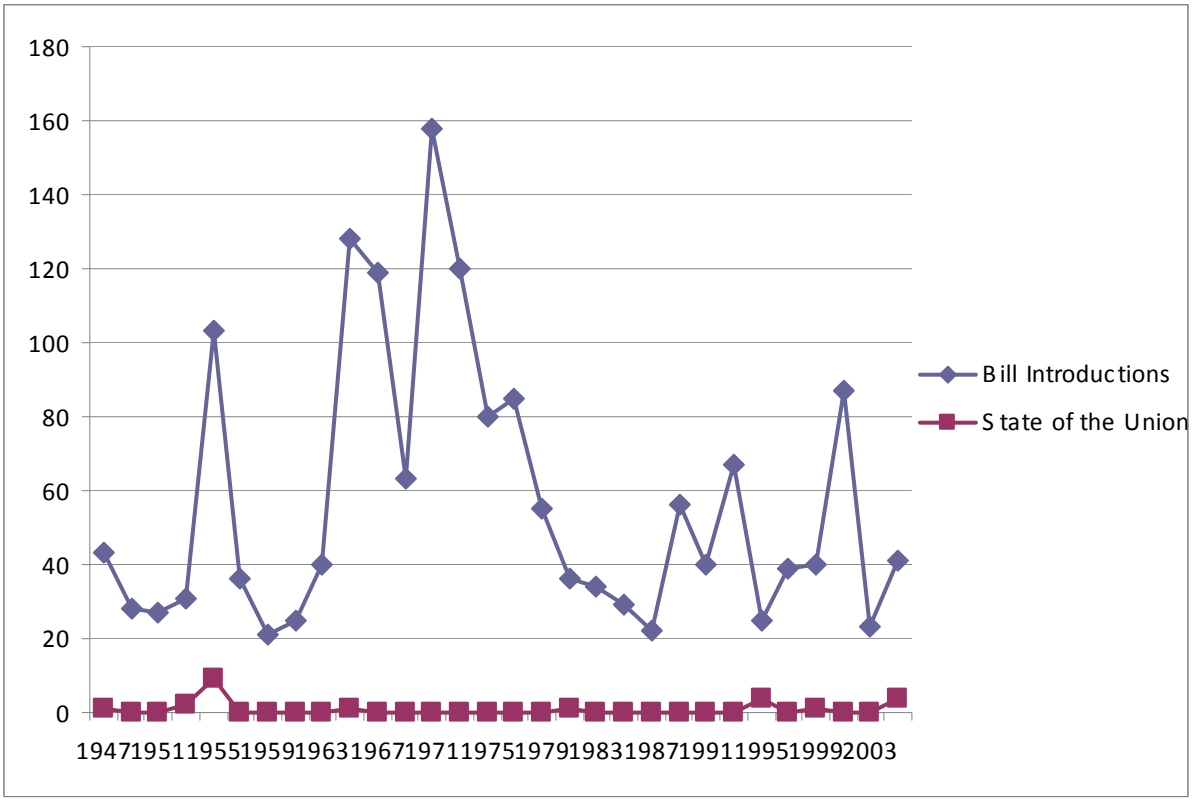
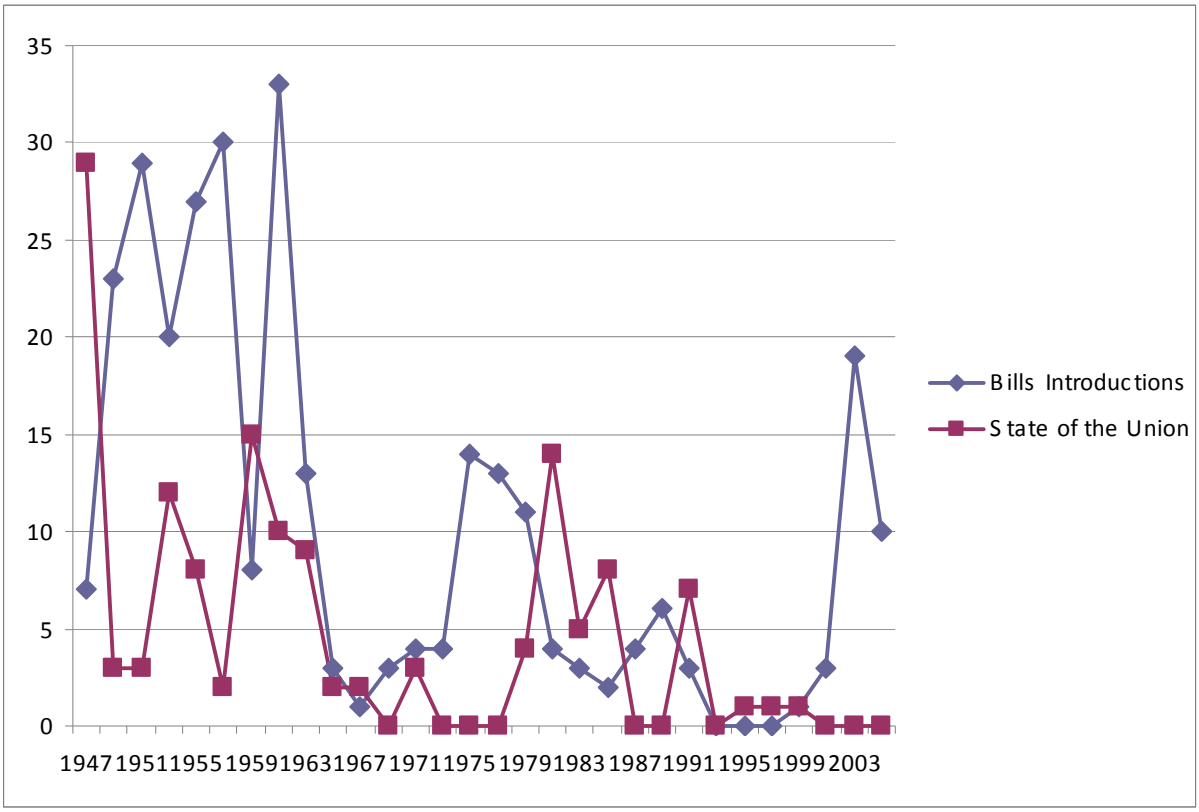


Figure 4.18: Bill Introductions and Presidential State of the Union: Civil Defense



Figures 4.17 and 4.18 compare bill introductions and Presidential State of the Union Addresses between the time series. The Pearson correlation for each time series.09 in the case of natural disasters and .1 for civil defense, suggest no relationship between bill introductions and presidential attention in either domain.

Overall, based on the above congressional activities, when it comes to disaster relief, it is understandable why FEMA, an agency created to handle natural disaster, and transferred in 2003 to the Department of Homeland Security (with an emphasis on counterterrorism), performed poorly in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. As the review of figures above illustrates, Congress seems to shift the image of disaster relief as it encounters them.

Conclusion

This chapter documented the issues on the civil defense and natural disaster agendas that receive attention, and where jurisdictional control and committee competition reside. Throughout the analysis defense was the main issue on the civil defense agenda. In the later-1950s throughout the early 1960s, attention to civil defense peaked, and slightly decreased in the next twenty-three years. However, after the attacks of September 11, 2001, the level of attention increased to some extent. The resulting diversity of issues on the agenda---defense, shelter, insurance, nuclear, air patrol and radiological---provided the Armed Services Committee the opportunity to guide the civil defense. Unlike civil defense, natural disaster illustrated an overall increase in activity. Once disaster emerged, a mix of issues comprised the agenda, not to mention the presence of committee competition. In Congress, natural disaster bill referrals usually involved competition, while the civil defense realm displayed more of the features of a policy monopoly.

Chapter Five

Dissecting Disaster Relief Agenda Setting and Efforts of Issue Redefinition

The previous chapter suggests that noticeable changes in the disaster relief agenda as measured by bill introductions occur as a result of punctuating events. This chapter is the second step in exploring and assessing the agenda of disaster relief policy through the examination of legislative hearings. This analysis includes both legislative and non-legislative hearings. Even though legislative hearings are important to agenda setting, non-legislative hearings are also significant to the process because they enable committees to frame or alter the definition of policy issues outside of their jurisdiction (Talbert, Jones, and Baumgartner, 1995, 384). There are three particular elements I will explore in this chapter concerning the disaster relief agenda.

First, I want to assess the overall level of hearing activity in both the House and the Senate. Similar to bill introductions, this chapter provides a general understanding of the level of attention Congress gives to disaster relief policy. This longitudinal approach is beneficial because it highlights whether a change in activity corresponds to a particular "punctuating event." Kingdon (1984) asserts that such focusing events are important because they have the potential to influence the overall institutional agenda.

Second, I will explore the dynamics of policy jurisdiction and policy monopoly. Identifying the committees that hold hearings tells something about the nature of disaster policy turf, allowing me to highlight periods of competition and monopoly in both policy streams in each chamber.

Third, picking up on an observation by Birkland (1998), who discussed how focusing events affect and shape policy communities, I will develop a coding instrument with the intent to approximate the multiple dimensions of disaster relief policy.

Data Collection

Like other studies that track agenda entrance by focusing on congressional activity, I focus on congressional hearings in this chapter. Hearings can include efforts of issue redefinition as well as attempts to maintain the status quo (Hunt, 2002; Tzoumia, 2001; Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). Prior research suggests that hearings are a key method by which Congress gathers policy information. By examining hearings in an aggregate form over time, one is able to identify pertinent differences in the set of interests active on a particular issue (Hardin, 2002; Sabatier and Jenkins Smith, 1993). Utilizing the Congressional Information Service *Index to Committee Hearings and Abstracts on Committee Hearings*, I was able to identify hearings dealing with disaster relief policy between 1954 and 2007. In order to capture the swing between natural disaster and civil defense, I conducted two searches. After consulting the "index terms" function of the Congressional Index Service, the search terms "disasters," "drought," "earthquake," "fires and fire prevention," "floods," "storms," and "tornadoes" were used to identify hearings (and committees) that deal with natural disasters. In order to locate hearings dealing with civil defense policy, I used terms such as "civil defense," "Civil Defense Advisory Council," "Federal Civil Defense Administration," "Office of Civil Defense," and "homeland security. "

The initial search produced close to 4000 hearings. After eliminating appropriations hearings and other hearings which did not actually deal with natural

disasters or civil defense, I was left with a total of 3571 hearings—2109 in the House and 1462 in the Senate. The case of the House involved 1506 focused on natural disasters and 604 dealing with civil defense. The search of Senate produced 1005 focused on natural disasters and 457 dealing with civil defense.

5.1. Mapping Hearing Activity

A review of figures 5.1 through 5.4 reveal several features of disaster relief policy. Not surprisingly, until the events of September 2001, natural disasters occupied more congressional space than does the discussion of civil defense (figures 5.1 and 5.2). The obvious aside, the attention to civil defense in the House and Senate are strongly correlated. Attention peaks in both chambers in 1950 and is focused on atomic energy, and the attendant fallout dealing with bomb shelters makes civil defense somewhat topical throughout the 1960. Interesting is the lack of focus on the events surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis in the House, despite the spike of attention in the Senate. Following that spike in attention, hearing activity drops off to a mere trickle through most of 2001.

Figure 5.1: House, Disaster Relief Policy 1945-2005

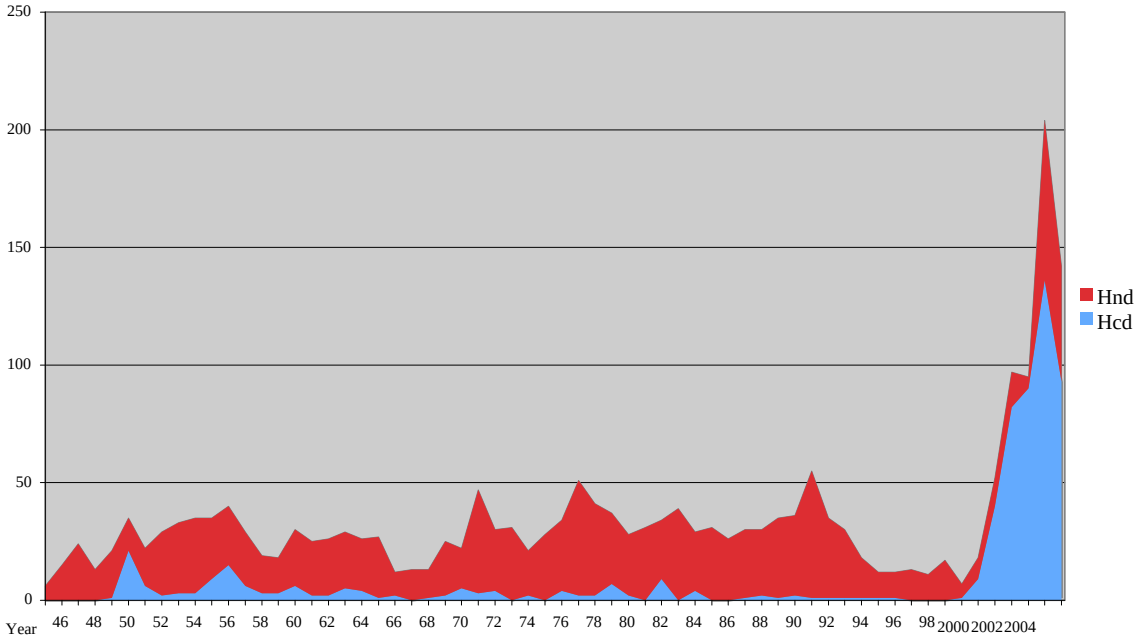
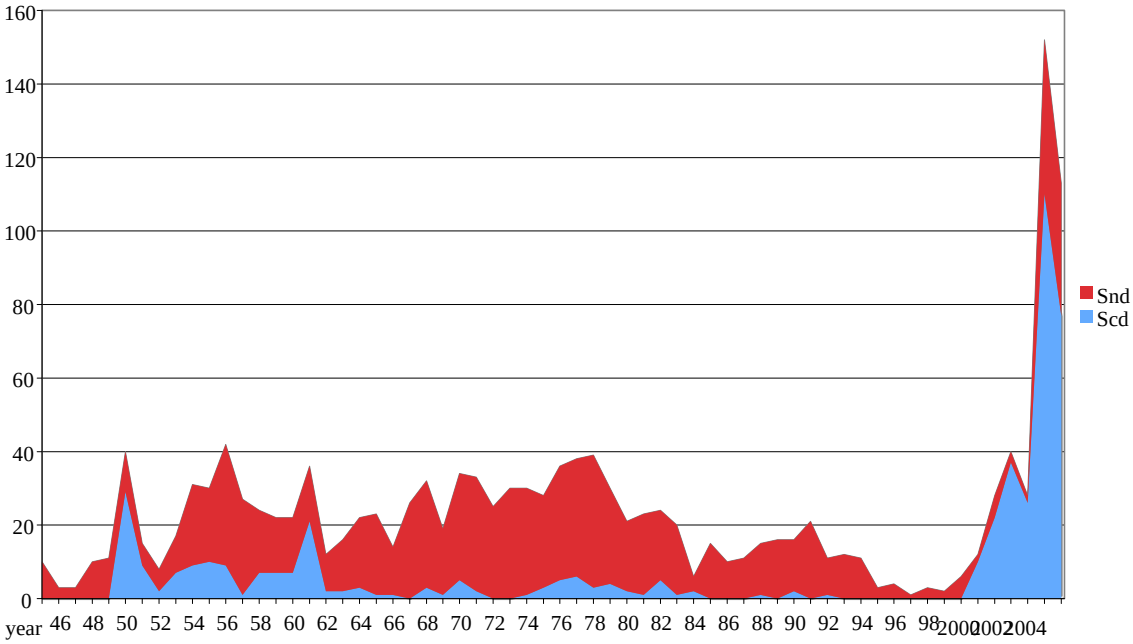


Figure 5.2: Senate, Disaster Relief Policy 1954-2005



Comparing each chamber's treatment of natural disasters reveals periods of incongruence not evident in the civil defense policy arena (figure 5.4). On the one hand, the House and Senate series mirror one another for the period 1945 through 1977 with a steady increase in attention over time. While the steady increase continues in the House up through 1990, it drops off precipitously in the Senate and is marked by a steady decline in attention until the events of Hurricane Katrina in 2005. In the 1990s, the House also assumes this steady decline in attention to natural disasters until the events of Hurricane Katrina.

Figure 5.3: Civil Defense Hearings, 1945-2005

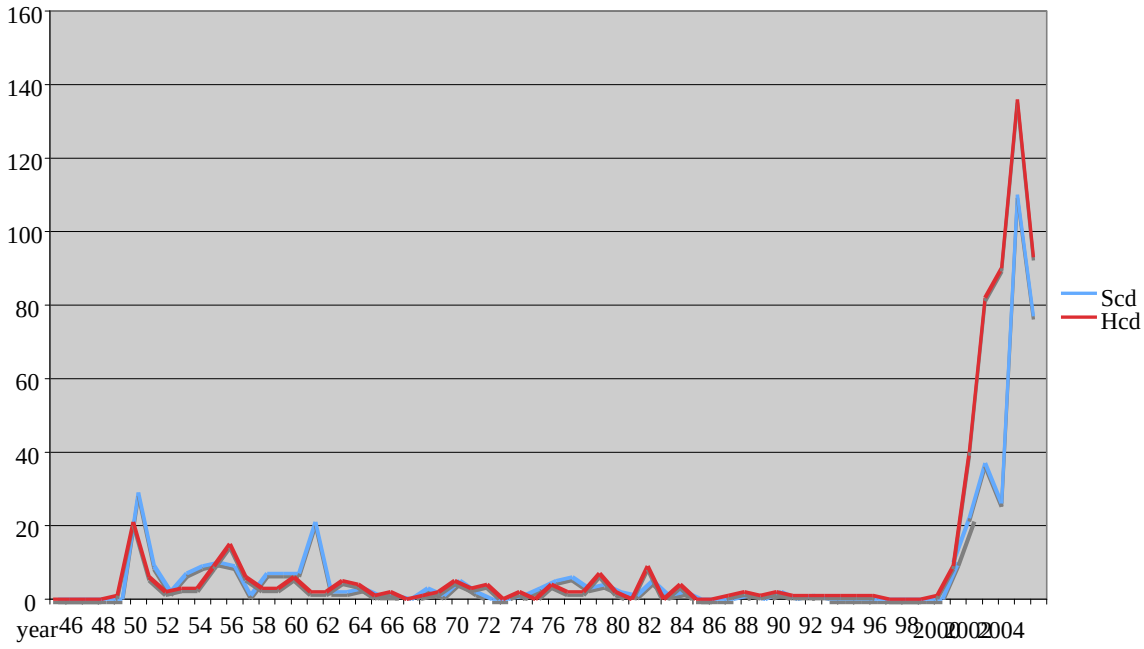
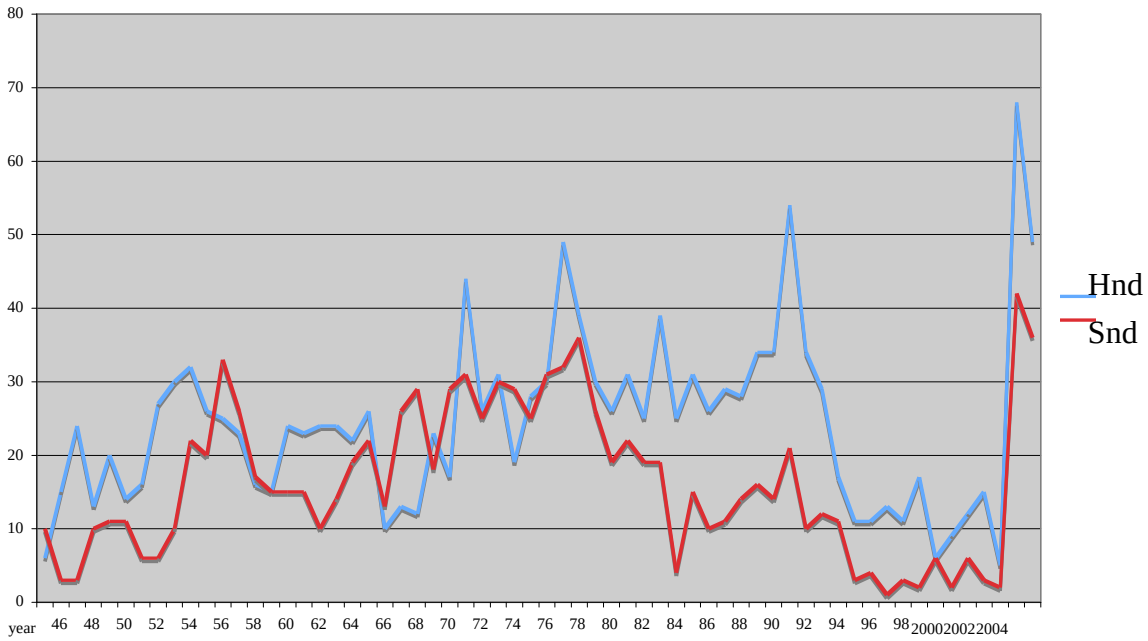


Figure 5.4: Natural Disaster Hearings, 1945-2005



5.2. Policy Jurisdiction and Committee Competition

To explore the institutional agenda further, figures 5.5-5.8 identify the committees that hold hearings in natural disaster and civil defense policy in the House and the Senate. As Birkland (1998), among others has noted with regard to effort to formulate policy to deal with hurricanes, disaster relief policy in both chambers appears nearly anarchic (figures 5.5 and 5.6). Rather than asking who controls disaster relief policy, one might instead be inclined to ask who does not control disaster relief policy. In all, thirteen committees in the House and a dozen in the Senate are regular players in the policy realm, with competition the norm during any particular year, as well as the dominant motif over time. Quite simply, no one appears in charge.

Compare this to the situation in the realm of civil defense (figures 5.7 and 5.8). While it might be hard to image more committee involvement in a realm than that found in the natural disasters, I identified fourteen committees in the House and sixteen in the Senate who made a regular appearance in the civil defense realm over the course of the study. This policy realm displays more of the features of a policy monopoly or subsystem than is the case in natural disaster policy. While there are a wide variety of committees that show up in six or more years between 1945 and 2006, there are much fewer regular players. The Armed Service Committee is the dominant player in both chambers, followed by Government Operations/Government Affairs Committee. It is not until 2002 that civil defense becomes subject to the intense competition and conflict that characterizes disaster relief policy. Even then, Armed Services Committee maintains its presence in the policy realm, although the renamed Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee grab the largest portion of turf, followed closely by the Judiciary Committee (at least initially). Similarly, the Homeland Security Committee is a major new player in the House, although it appears to be involved in a realm characterized by oligopoly, sharing near equal space with Judiciary and Government Operations Committee.

This increased attention and the number of committees involved in the civil defense realm supports the argument by Cobb and Elder (1972, 35) that agenda setting, particularly the institutional agenda setting, is routinely characterized by the degree of competition between sides. Additionally, attempts by various committees to determine the civil defense agenda in 2002, confirms the work of Baumgartner of Jones (1993), who indicate that most punctuating events lead to an increase in committee competition.

Notably, the rise in competition during this crisis period (i.e. the attacks of September 11, 2001) coincides with the committee competition present during the referral of bill introductions that was discusses in the previous chapter.

Overall, the initial foray into mapping attention and turf control suggests that civil defense operates much like the classic policy monopoly, anchored by the Armed Service committees which enjoy near monopoly control, interspaced with brief periods of competition, and relatively low salience. The events of September 2001 served as a storm in this relative calm, producing a new subsystem anchor in the Senate and institutionalizing competition in the House. Given this analysis, I am puzzled by the seemingly institutionalized anarchy found in the natural disaster policy realm, a subject to which I now turn.

Figure 5.5: House, Natural Disaster Hearings: Committee Competition

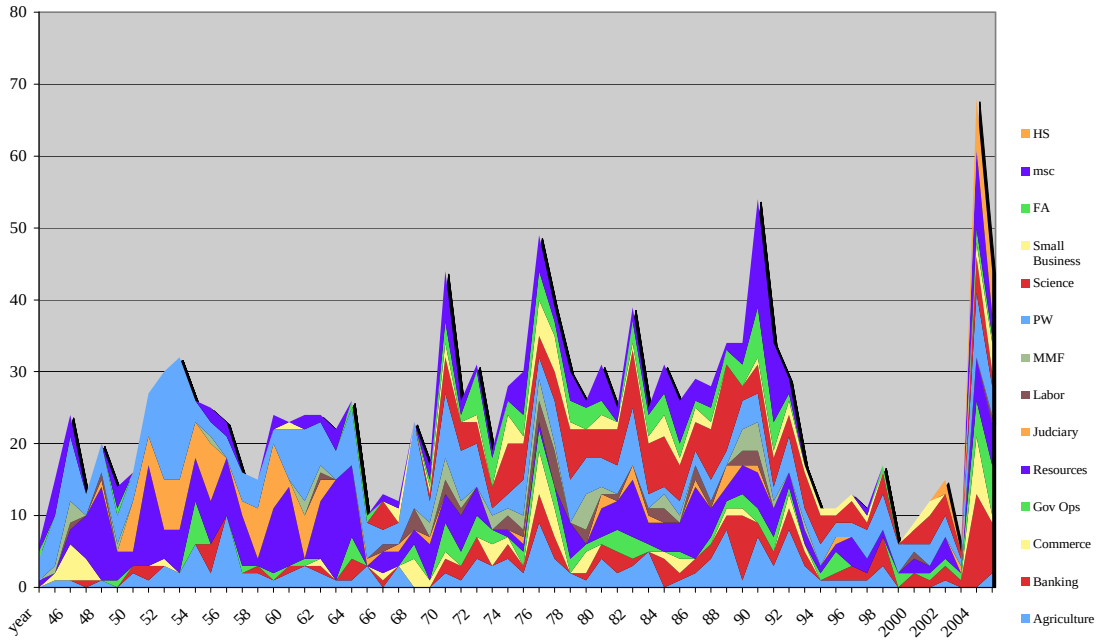


Figure 5.6: Senate, Natural Disaster Hearings: Committee Competition

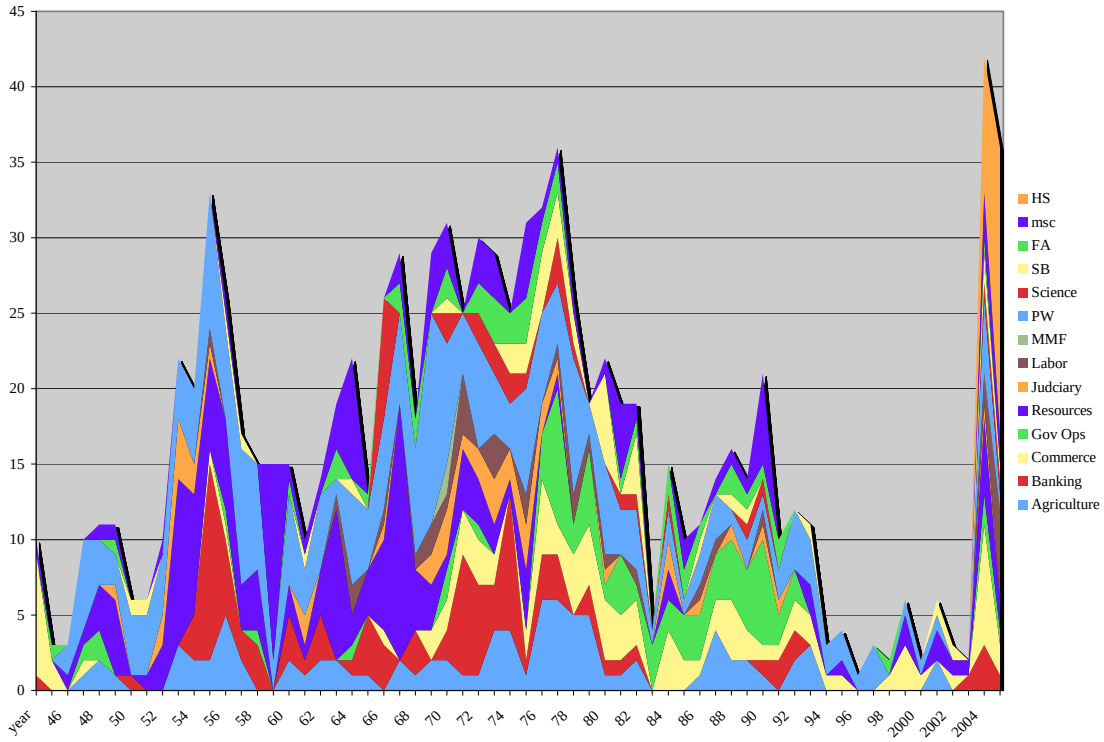


Figure 5.7: House, Civil Defense Hearings 1945-2005

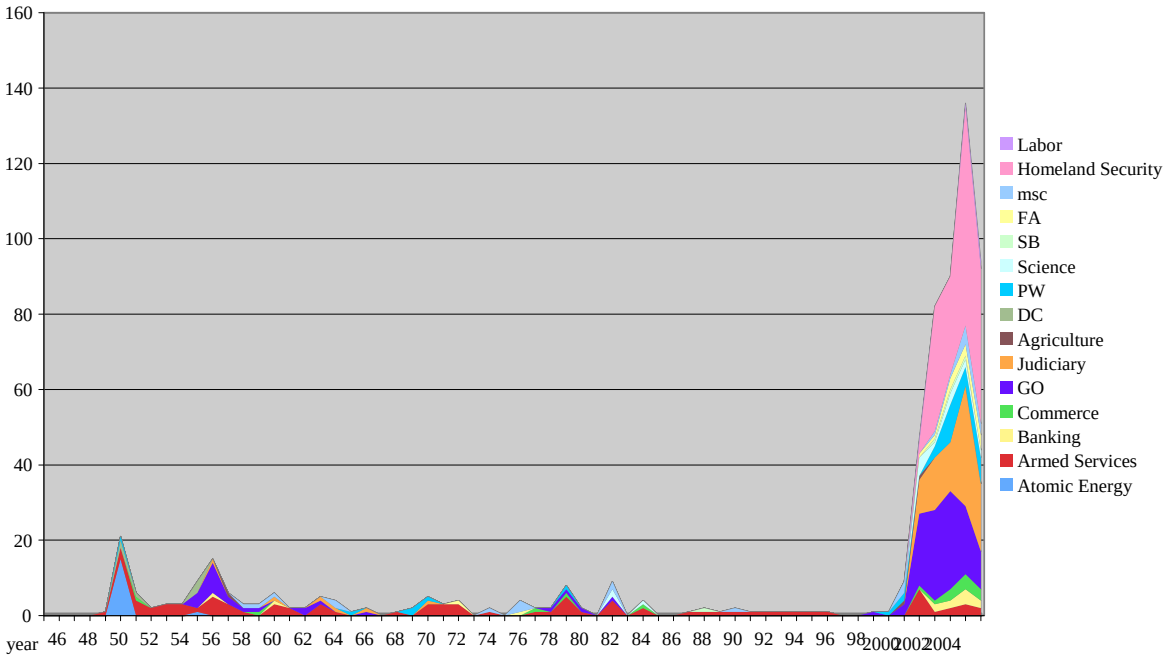
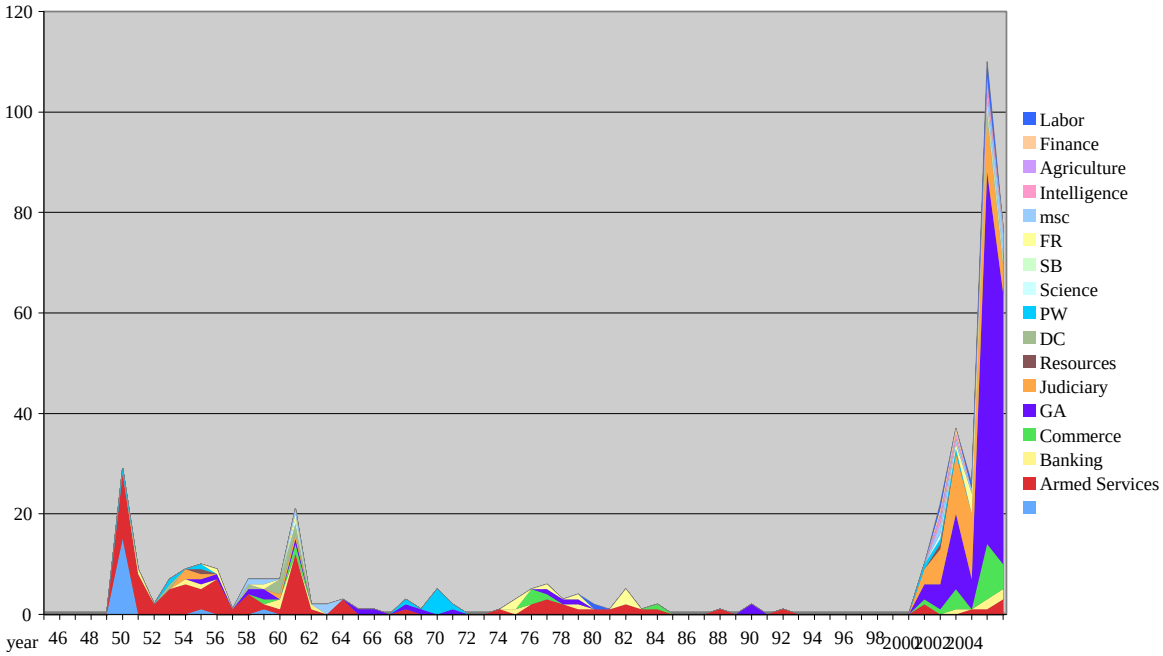


Figure 5.8: Senate, Civil Defense Hearings 1945-2005



5.3. The Topic of Discussion

Picking up on an observation of Birkland (1998), who noted how focusing events affect the shape of policy communities, I developed a coding instrument intended to pinpoint the multiple dimensions of disaster relief policy. Birkland (1998, 62) found the earthquake community was more "coherent, organized and ongoing" than was the case with the policy community dealing with hurricanes. In view of this argument, one might expect the identity and variety of committees involved in the discussion of earthquakes to be markedly different than that focused on hurricanes (controlling for the free-for-all associated with a punctuating event). By tracking the committees involved in various aspects of disaster relief, I will be able to determine whether what looks like system level chaos actually masks a more orderly process. Utilizing the advanced search function of

the *CIS*, I broke disasters down by types, conducting separate searches for floods, storms, tornadoes, fires, hurricanes, and earthquakes—six of the eight search terms produces under "natural disaster' heading. By doing so, I am looking for evidence that the various sub-fields of disaster policy operate along lines associated with policy communities or subsystems; that is, there is some coherence as to how Congress processes the various issues.

Figures 5.9 and 5.10 track the committees involved in each policy realm for the House and Senate respectively.

Figure 5.9: House, Natural Disaster Relief Policy by Topic

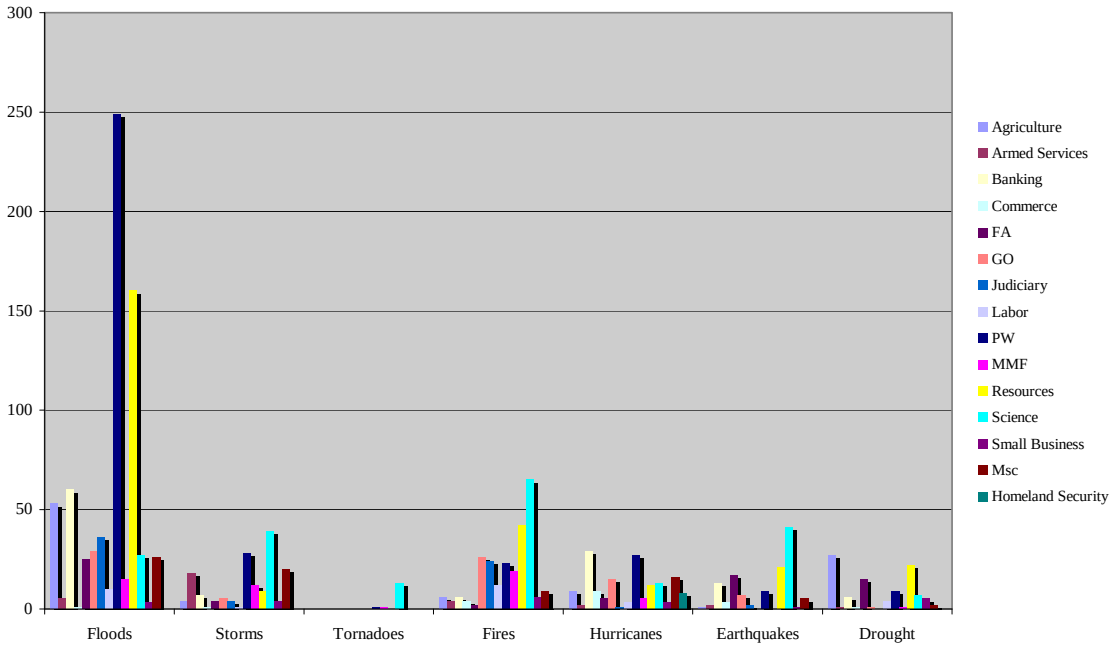
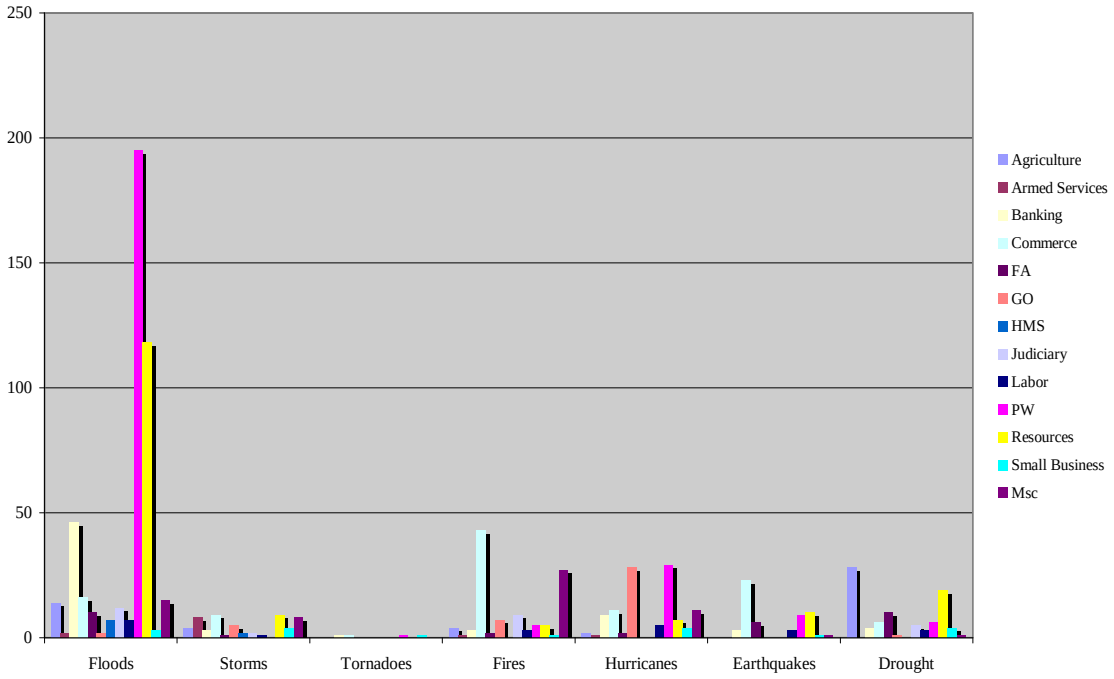


Figure 5.10: Senate, Natural Disaster Relief Policy by Topic



Based on the figures, only tornadoes in the House fit the criteria for a classic policy monopoly, although many of policy realms find the bulk of hearings held by two or three committees, suggesting a division of turf, very typical of a competitive subsystem. Still, hearings dealing with storms in both chambers and hurricanes hearings in the House appear to be a free for all, and fire hearings in the House are close to becoming one.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the level of congressional attention and debate given to disaster relief policy. In Chapter Two, I noted the Baumgartner and Jones (1993) theory, which suggested policy equilibrium are a product of institutional arrangements and issue framing. While the general consensus is that policy equilibrium is not static, the existence of subsystems have functioned as wavering equilibrium against accepting a chaos theory

of public policy. Quite simply, subsystem arrangements are dynamic, with change a product of some combination of macro-level events and internal (coalition-based) dynamics. Although it may not be anarchy incarnate, the natural disaster policy realm is unusually chaotic. I believe that the chaos exhibited may have something with the nature of such events. They are unexpected, even when, like hurricanes, they occur with a certain amount of regularity. As such, their consequences are difficult to predict and control. To some extent, they affect large areas of the population, so they invite widespread participation. By contrast, so much civil defense involves preparation for an event that may or may not occur, at least until September 11, 2001. This allowed a civil defense policy system to develop that looked more like the standard institution-based system for much of the 20th century. Overall, it seems that the near chaos found in natural disaster hearings mirror the introduction and legislative referrals observed in the previous chapter.

Chapter Six

Concluding Comments

I began this study with two objectives. The first was to examine the origins and evolution of disaster relief policy in order to understand its shifting image. The second was to understand how Congress governs the agenda of disaster relief policy in the post-war period.

So what does the research say about agenda setting and disaster relief policy? First, the research confirms the observations of most scholars who assert that agenda setting is a dynamic and inherently complex political process. In the case of my research, three observations stand out: (1) Focusing events impact issue salience, (2) the multidimensional nature of disaster relief policy allows various dimension of the issue to gain agenda access and (3) the disaster relief policy subsystem has been formed through incremental historical processes.

Disaster relief policy exhibited two distinct traits. First, the civil defense subsystem functions primarily as a "dominant coalition." Worsham suggests that in a dominant coalition scenario " a committee or subcommittee is able to establish unquestioned jurisdiction in a particular policy area"(1997, 3). However, in the case of a punctuating event, the policy equilibrium maintained by the dominant coalition tends to be disrupted, leading to the emergence of previously excluded interests into the subsystem. The study reveals a change in policy outcome as a result of the events of September 11, 2001. Still, findings indicate that the Armed Services Committee in both chambers is the dominant venue in civil defense policy, even when attention to the issue is elevated.

Second, the natural disaster subsystem functions primarily as a "competitive coalition." As other scholars argue, in a competitive coalition scenario, competition may be the result of challenges by members of other committees (and subsystems), who in response to perceived threats to their autonomy, engage in turf wars (Worsham, 1997; Ripley and Franklin, 1986; and King, 1997). In this study, these turf wars are elevated when punctuating events occur, and as a result, the natural disaster policy realm is unusually chaotic. That said, even during "normal times" the policy realm is one that borders on near anarchy, with a wide variety of committees claiming a piece of the policy domain. In regard to setting the disaster relief policy agenda in Congress, changes that occur happen in both an incremental and radical fashion. When radical change occurs, the old ways of doing things are replaced by new organizational forms (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 235). For example, prior to 1950, disasters were viewed as "Acts of God." The accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant then necessitated the creation of FEMA. FEMA was later restructured, reorganized and eventually moved to DHS following the attacks of September 11, 2001. The Congressional agenda of disaster relief policy is thus reactive in nature and characterized by the occurrence of organizational change associated with punctuating events.

Aside from the approach taken in this study, there are certainly other venues and perspectives to explore which would be useful for future research. For example, future research could focus on the role of subcommittees in agenda setting, as well as highlight the likely influence they may have in policy changes (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 202). At the macro-level, future research focusing on the Red Cross would enrich the

literature on subsystem and policymaking. In addition, taking a closer look at the presidency and the courts are another equally beneficial aspects to explore. While the analysis would explore whether the actions of the president are linked to congressional activities and efforts of issue redefinition, it would also explicitly assess whether decisions rendered by the court disrupt the turf monopoly.

On the micro-level, focusing exclusively on how states and local governments comply or fail to comply with federal guidelines can be of further research and usefulness. For example, examining the response of the Governor of Louisiana and the Mayor of New Orleans during and in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina would further illustrate how communication and coordination can influence program delivery (Cropf, 2008). Furthermore, such an examination would also highlight the complexities of a principal-agent relationship that have been noted by various scholars (Golden, 2000; Brehm and Gates, 1999; Mitnick, 1984). In conclusion, the congressional approach utilized for this research is only a beginning step in exploring the dynamic evolution of disaster relief policy.

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Appendix

Table 4.1: Civil Defense Bill Introductions by Session

Year	Session	House	Senate
1947	80	3	4
1949	81	3	20
1951	82	3	26
1953	83	2	18
1955	84	17	10
1957	85	24	6
1959	86	2	6
1961	87	25	8
1963	88	11	2
1965	89	1	2
1967	90	1	0
1969	91	3	0
1971	92	4	0
1973	93	4	0
1975	94	12	2
1977	95	12	1
1979	96	9	2
1981	97	3	1
1983	98	2	1
1985	99	2	0
1987	100	2	2
1989	101	3	3
1991	102	2	1
1993	103	0	0
1995	104	0	0
1997	105	0	0
1999	106	1	0
2001	107	2	1
2003	108	12	7
2005	109	6	4
Total		171	127

Table 4.2: Disaster Relief Bill Introductions by Session

Year	Session	House	Senate
1947	80	29	14
1949	81	18	10
1951	82	17	10
1953	83	13	18
1955	84	83	20
1957	85	28	8
1959	86	21	0
1961	87	23	2
1963	88	26	14
1965	89	100	28
1967	90	113	6
1969	91	45	18
1971	92	88	70
1973	93	96	24
1975	94	70	10
1977	95	71	14
1979	96	44	11
1981	97	25	11
1983	98	23	11
1985	99	14	15
1987	100	13	9
1989	101	45	11
1991	102	27	13
1993	103	49	18
1995	104	19	6
1997	105	23	16
1999	106	21	19
2001	107	55	32
2003	108	16	7
2005	109	37	4
Total		1.252	449